1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

133 Great Rift valley, walled in on the east by the Livingstone mountains, which rise to 10,000 feet, and on the west by the rather lower Ndali hills. It is blocked to the north-west by Rungwe volcano and the Poroto mountains; the volcano rises from the floor of the Rift to nearly 10,000 feet, and the lowest pass over the Poroto mountains is 8,000 feet. Scattered throughout the hills are a number of small lakes formed in the craters of old volcanoes, each one like a jewel set in the green of field and pasture.

132 161 The rainfall in this valley is very heavy, averaging over 100 inches in the year, and innumerable streams rush down the mountain slopes, flooding parts of the plain during the torrential rains of March and April. The dry season is short—it scarcely exists in the hills—and such a rainfall, combined with skilful cultivation and stock-breeding, makes a large population possible. The average density for Rungwe district is over eighty persons to the square mile; the population is most concentrated on the Lake-shore plain, but stretches up into the hills to 6,000 feet. South of the Songwe the rainfall is much less—at Karonga it averages only 45 inches a year—and the country supports a smaller population, the average density for Ngonde being less than fifteen persons to the square mile.

●244 [23] The Nyakyusa grow a variety of crops of which the chief are bananas and plantains, finger millet, maize, cow-peas, coco-yams, cassava, sweet potatoes, ground-nuts, curcurbits and, recently, rice and coffee. They also breed short-horned, humped, cattle which are carefully stalled at night, and hand-dressed to keep them free from ticks. Banana plantations stretch mile upon mile through the plain and along the crests of the ridges.[1] In them are hidden the villages, often so close together that the boundaries between them are not obvious. On the fringes of the bananas are the tilled fields, and beyond the fields the open pasture land. Unlike most of their neighbours in Central Africa the Nyakyusa practise fixed, not shifting, cultivation, and the land is kept in good heart by green manuring, rotation of crops, and periodic fallows.[2] Only in the cultivation of finger millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins,

[1] J. F. Elton, *The Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa* (1879), pp. 330–1, and D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., pp. 283–6, comment on their great extent.

[2] According to the Nyakyusa themselves the productivity of their fields is slowly diminishing. Most of them attribute this to the neglect of traditional rituals. We do not know how far their observations are objective, and how far they are biased by the tendency to glorify the past. D. H. Thwaites, in his article

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

planted at the break of the rains, and of the new crop, rice, is a seed-bed of ash prepared, and then it is grass and scrub which is burned; they do not fell or pollard trees to provide ash. For other crops there is no burning; the weeds are hoed in green instead; and, at a second hoeing before planting, the earth is piled into ridges or mounds to ensure drainage. Formerly, it is said, the chiefs insisted that the ridges on slopes should be made contour-wise, and recently this law has been revived. Elton, the first European to travel through the area, observed that there was 'terraced cultivation everywhere';[1] and the ridges do in fact look like terracing from a distance.

Hoeing is the work of men and boys; only quite recently have a few women, whose husbands are away in European employment, begun to hoe for themselves. And most men hoe for three or four hours a day during the greater part of the year, for crops are planted in succession. Neither old age nor high status excuses a man from this duty. Even the chief Mwaipopo, who was already grown up when the Europeans arrived in his country, hoed regularly in his fields during the years 1935–8. Iron hoes were made by Nyakyusa smiths from iron obtained from the Kinga,[2] but they were scarce, and some men had to use wooden hoes such as many of the women still have for weeding (*vide* Plate VII). The women are solely responsible for sowing, weeding, and reaping.

Cattle are fairly numerous:[3] few men over twenty-five nowadays own none, and many older men have four or five cows in their stalls. Long ago, we were told, cattle were scarcer, some men having to marry without them, but Cotterill (1876)[4] and Kerr-Cross (1890)[5] both said 'cattle abound' in Nyakyusa coun-

on 'Wanyakyusa Agriculture' (*The East African Agricultural Journal*, April 1944), states that 'though the soil is not being eroded to any great extent it is still being impoverished'.

[1] Elton, op. cit., pp. 326, 330.

[2] Thomson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 272–3. Possibly iron was also obtained from the west. Kerr Cross (op. cit. p. 289) saw large foundries in Nyika country before 1890. *cf.* Elton, op. cit., p. 321 and map at the end.

[3] No census of the cattle in the district had been taken when we were among the Nyakyusa. D. H. Thwaites, op. cit., states that, 'The number of cattle in the district (Rungwe) in the 1941 census was about 2.3 head per taxpayer or 33 head per square mile'.

[4] H. B. Cotterill, 'On the Nyasa and a Journey from the North End to Zanzibar', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XXII (1878).

[5] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Cruise-lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 129.

I:Wilson E-5(1934-1955)1951 FN17 Ngoma FN17
Nyakyusa

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I. CULTIVATION IN NYAKYUSA COUNTRY

In the foreground are bananas, coffee, and bamboos; in the middle ridges for sweet potatoes and grounds for maize. On the extreme right Rungwe volcano appears. The house is a modern style, and raised for drainage.

[facing p. 18]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

different herds of cattle; and it is not only those from the same group of herd-boys that set up a new village together, but all the sons of the age-village. Thus when a boy leaves the herd group he joins a larger community, including the friends of his own age who have herded cows with him, and many others as well. Every boys' village consists primarily of the sons of the member of an older village who originally gave the land for its building, but sons of other villages live there too.

The village begins with perhaps a dozen boys, and their younger brothers join them, one by one; but after some years, when the senior members of the boys' village are between sixteen and eighteen years old, the younger ones begin to be refused admittance to the village: 'they are children.' The young ones then either begin a new age-village of their own, or else join a village which has already been started by the sons of a nearby men's village a little junior to that of their own fathers. If you inquire who are the members of such and such a boys' village you are always told that they are the sons of a particular village of men, but detailed investigation reveals the presence of some sons of other men's villages as well. Brothers, half-brothers and other relatives are sometimes members of the same village, but more often not; and if they do belong to the same village that is because they are near each other in age, and were born in the same village, not because they are kinsmen.

The members of the older boys' village, which is now closed and no longer increases in numbers, begin to marry as they reach the age of about twenty-five. Getting married is often a gradual process; but it is not until he has his wife permanently with him that a young man can have fields of his own and eat the produce at his own place. The cultivation of land requires the co-operation of a man and woman, and cooking on any elaborate scale is a woman's business. As the young men marry their village expands. The site is not changed but the houses are built ever bigger and farther apart, and adjacent land is brought under cultivation. The boys' village with which we are best acquainted is in this transitional stage. It has fifty-three members altogether, the majority of whom are single; but some few are married, cultivate their own fields with their wives and eat food cooked by their wives in their own houses. Of those who are single some again are betrothed to girls who visit them from time to time, but each

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

582 still cultivates his father's fields and eats at his father's home. In
241 former days, we were told, the marriage age of men was even
621 later than it is at present (*vide infra*, p. 80). 'Perhaps after twenty a boy would be betrothed, but to a young girl, and he would wait eight years before she grew up.'

857 From the time boys begin to herd they recognize one of their number as a leader. 'When we herd cows as boys', a friend told us, 'there is always one who is obeyed by his fellows whatever he says. No one chooses him, he gains his leadership and his prestige by bodily strength. For always, when we are boys together among the cows, we vie with one another and dispute about going to turn back straying cattle, or about fetching fire to cook the food we have brought with us. And so we start fighting, and we go on fighting until one of us beats all his fellows completely and so becomes the leader. And then it is he who sends others to turn back straying cattle, to fetch fire and to collect firewood. And he is greatly respected. He settles quarrels too. What we quarrel about most as boys is a particular insult: one says to another: "You are only a child, you are, I am your senior." This is always happening and then it is the part of the one who is leader to set those two on to fight. We all stand round and watch and the one who first cries is proved the child.'

622 Later, when the boys have built apart from their fathers, one of their number is often appointed by the headman of their fathers' village to settle disputes between them. Some boys' villages have no such appointed leader, but many of them do. Such appointments are, however, temporary. It is only when political authority is transferred to their generation that the young men's permanent leaders are chosen.

b. The 'coming out' ceremony

561 Eight or ten years after the young men of the senior boys'
622 village of the chiefdom have begun to marry, their fathers hand
621 over the government of the country to them. This transfer of authority is effected in an elaborate ceremony called the 'coming
643 out' (**ukuseka**).

The 'coming out' is a series of legal acts by which the country of an old chief and his village headman (*amafumu*) is, with certain reservations, handed over into the possession and control of his

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

602 476 THE primary economic units in Nyakyusa society are the kinship groups—the elementary family, the cattle-owing lineage, and the group of cognates who co-operate in production and exchange many gifts, and among whom cattle circulate.[1] However, fellow villagers also work together, exchange food, and have a common interest in certain property.

a. Land

423 245 The village is the land-holding group. As we have seen, land is allocated to a boys' village, at its commencement, by the parent village, that is the village to which the fathers of most of the boys belong. Little boys' huts are usually to be seen going up on a strip of pasture-land, adjoining the block of banana groves which shroud their fathers' houses. The boys' land is primarily a building site, but very soon after moving into their huts they turn over the ground and plant banana suckers (*vide* Plate II). Bananas begin to bear very quickly, and so in a little more than a year after the establishment of a boys' village, its members have bananas of their own, which they cook for themselves and eat with their friends at odd times during the day. But they have, as yet, no fields, for the cultivation of fields requires the co-operation of a wife. Bachelors continue to eat their main meals at their parents' village. As the boys grow up and marry they begin to cultivate garden-land adjacent to their village. Some of these gardens are acquired by individuals from their own fathers and fathers-in-law, but whether there may also be a block grant of garden-land by the parent village as a whole to the boys' village as a whole we are not certain. In any case the land of boys' villages is limited, and at the 'coming out'-the old men move aside and the young men enter their inheritance. The allotment to each village is

241 423 423

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe Brown and Daryll Forde.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 travellers in the area all comment on the excellently built huts and the cleanness of the villages.[1] Lord Lugard calls their huts 'the neatest and the most wonderfully built of any I have seen in Africa, excepting only the houses of the king and chiefs in Uganda.'[2] This high standard of building necessitates hard work and co-operation between a number of men and women.

c. Cultivation

●241 The primary unit in cultivation is the elementary family consisting of a man, his wife and unmarried children or, in the case of a polygynous family, of the house group of a wife and her children, together with her husband, part of whose time is spent in hoeing her fields.[3] There is also, however, some co-operation with other relatives, and with village neighbours.

241 476 Unmarried sons hoe with their fathers and very often they bring one or more village-mates to work with them, making return, in due course, by working with these friends for their respective fathers. The boys who come are fed after hoeing, and should be fed generously, by the woman in whose fields they have worked. After his betrothal a young man comes in the same way with village-mates to hoe for his father-in-law, as well as continuing to hoe for his own father. Once his wife joins him they have their own fields, and the bulk of his time is spent in hoeing for her, but he still hoes one or two strips (*embaka*) for his own father and for his father-in-law. Such help is reciprocal, for his 'mothers' (i.e. his own mother and his father's other wives) and sisters, as well as the 'mothers' and sisters of his wife, will help his wife with her tasks of sowing, weeding, and reaping. From the point of view of village organization the essential fact is that young men working for fathers and fathers-in-law very frequently bring one or two village-mates with them. A typical hoeing group is made up of a man with his sons, and one or two village-mates of the sons.

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Larger hoeing parties, to which not only youths, but also older men come, are fairly common, especially among the Kukwe.

[1] Elton, op. cit., p. 323; D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa' in *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 116–7.

[2] F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), Vol. I, p. 52.

[3] The respective rights of the husband and of each wife have been analysed by Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., pp. 16–29.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 476 To these come some of a man's village-mates and male relatives or special friends from other villages, as well as his sons and sons-in-law with their village-mates. At one such party we noted in the morning eight helpers, of which six were men, two being classificatory brothers of the owner and four of them friends. There were also two young sons of the owner working. In the afternoon a son-in-law came with a party of his village-mates. Such hoeing parties are not the concern of the whole village. Only those who have been specially invited, or very close friends of the owner of the field, come (the number usually ranging between ten and twenty), and some of those invited may be from other villages. It is difficult for one to whom an invitation has been sent to refuse. After work the guests are feasted. Traditionally they were given milk with bananas or beans (a prized food), but nowadays beer is expected. For the party noted above two pots of beer were provided, one being given to the older men and the other to the son-in-law with his friends. Christians, many of whom are forbidden to brew beer, provide meat, rice, or milk —all much prized foods. Possibly the proportion of men attending this type of work party has diminished as opportunity for paid employment has increased—we have no certain evidence.

Mutual assistance in cultivation turns on kinship and personal friendship: all the members of a village or a village-section are not obliged to work with a neighbour. But it is insisted that neighbours should keep in step with one another in cultivation. It will be remembered that their garden-lands are together, and each year different types of garden are hoed by groups of villagers—millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins in one place, potatoes in another, maize and beans in another, so that while the gardens of one particular household are scattered, each crop is in one or two blocks. Neighbours cultivating the same crop in adjoining fields should, according to Nyakyusa ideas, begin each process in cultivation together, and the whole village should keep in step. As one informant put it, 'in hoeing and planting one must be neither ahead of nor behind one's neighbours'.

241 476 622 The idea reaches its furthest development among the Kukwe in regard to three crops planted with the first rains, namely, finger millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins. Traditionally, no Kukwe man might begin to clear ground for these crops until his village headman had begun, or, if he lived in the village of a chief or in

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

an immediately adjoining village, until his chief had begun. Members of other villages do not regard the chief, but wait only for their village headman to begin. Within the family, junior wives must follow senior wives, but there is no precedence between brothers. If two should live in the same village it does not matter which begins sowing first, provided both follow the leader, nor need a junior age-village wait on a senior one to begin. Not only must the headman of the village begin the clearing, but each process in cultivation must be initiated by him or his senior wife; thus clearing, raking, burning, planting, and reaping, are ceremonially begun, and the wife of the headman should be the first to wash her millet, and he the first to eat of the new crop. Further, once a process is initiated, the villagers should press on with their tasks so that all may finish about the same time.

Now the cultivation of millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins[1] is peculiar in that the weeds and grass are not turned in for green manure, as they are for all other crops (except rice), but are collected in heaps and burnt, just before the rains break at the end of the dry season. And the fire for this must be lighted ritually by the headman of the village. Using fire-sticks and 'medicine of plenty' (*unkota gwa ifugo*[2]) bought by the Kukwe from the Sangu people, he ignites a special fire in his own field and then, if a great wife of the chief lives in the village, he lights the heaps in her field. All the members of the village take fire from him, or from the field of the chief's wife. To take fire from a house is forbidden, because the owner of the house from which it is taken may be a witch, who will rot the heaps so that the millet does not grow, or will not ripen. Roasting food on a burning heap, or taking a brand to light tobacco is likewise forbidden, lest the person who does so has medicine which will rot the millet.

It is thought that if one breaks the rule, beginning a process before the headman, the fields of all the other villagers will suffer. 'If men hoe higgledy piggledy the food in their gardens does not grow, and if they reap higgledy piggledy the yield from all the

[1] Some Kukwe held that these rules about cultivation applied also to maize and to an old root crop, *umbogo*, but the most reliable informants were agreed that the rule was only strictly enforced with regard to the three crops planted 'at the break of the rains, in the new year'.

[2] 'A village headman, *ugwa ifugo*, is one who drives off witches and protects the food.'

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

gardens will be small.' And the crops of one who lags behind, when his fellows have planted together, are also said to suffer. For this reason, if one woman is delayed and unable to work along with them, her friends will plant a corner of her field when they plant their own, so that the fertility of her fields may not be lost. 241

An educated informant explained that 'those who have learnt agriculture may think that late planting is unsuccessful because it is not the right season—the weather is wrong—but others think the failure is due to not planting at the same time as their neighbours.' Christians living on mission land, with their gardens in a block by themselves, do not trouble about planting simultaneously, but many of those living in mixed villages with fields adjoining the fields of pagans conform 'because if they do not plant with them they do not have pleasant social relations'. In some chiefdoms, however, the custom is dying even among pagans. In Porokoto's country we were told: 'The custom is now dead, men just burn higgledy piggledy. A fire blazes up somewhere. We ask, "Whose is it?" "So and so's" comes the reply. "Oh! All right!" The custom has died because the Christians are many and the chiefs have turned to the Christians; their hearts are with the Christians even though they themselves are not baptized, and about this burning of the rubbish heaps for millet they say: "What is it for? Does it avail anything?" '

Among the people of Selya the rule was traditionally less elaborate than among the Kukwe. It is polite and customary for those whose fields adjoin to call one another so that they may begin each process together. 'We speak to each other saying: "Friends, let us hoe a millet field over there, all of us, hunger comes on us." ' And if a son hoes a field next to his father's his 'mothers' call their daughter-in-law to plant with them, since their fields adjoin. But the only sanctions for keeping in step in hoeing and planting are conventional; there is no suggestion that the laggard's crops will fail. If, however, a man *burns* his millet field before his neighbours have heaped their weeds, they have ground for complaint. They say: 'Why have you harmed our crops?' 241 576

Underlying the emphasis on neighbours cultivating simultaneously is the idea that the fertility of fields and crops in ear can be stolen by witchcraft and sorcery, and that if one man's 241 754

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 754 crop is conspicuously better than that of his neighbours it is at their expense; he has illegally enticed the fertility or grain from their fields into his own; he has, in the Nyakyusa phrase 'overstepped' his neighbours.

Ideas as to what creates 'overstepping' vary slightly in the different local groups, but everywhere it is insisted that no man should get a start of his neighbours by burning his rubbish heaps with medicines before they are ready to do so. And not only does communal burning prevent individuals 'overstepping' their neighbours, but the medicine used is said to be a direct protection against witches and sorcerers. Dependence upon medicines and the elaboration of taboos are thus associated with a technique of cultivation—burning of weeds—in which fertility diminishes rapidly, much more rapidly than it does with the technique of green manuring practised for other crops.

241 The Nyakyusa have no elaborate communal ritual of the first-fruits, emphasizing precedence, such as plays a great part among many of the Southern Bantu. Significantly, their Ngonde relatives, with a more centralized political organization, forbade any man to eat of the new maize and pumpkin leaves until these had been offered ritually, first at the ancestral grove of their overlord, Kyungu, then at the groves of their chiefs, beginning with the senior, and then to the ancestors of each family. The Kukwe say that the headman of the village should be the first to eat certain of the new crops, just as he is the first to hoe, and plant, and reap, but the people of Selya do not trouble at all about precedence in this matter.

754 Among all the Nyakyusa, however, those who have been drinking the chief's *ifingela* medicine, or medicines for protection against sorcery which return the disease to the sender, must take special precautions when eating food grown on fields fertilized with ash. Now the medicine burnt with the rubbish is said to protect the crops from witches and sorcerers, and both the chief's *ifingela* medicine and retaliatory medicines border on sorcery. The underlying idea seems to be that since those who have been using these dangerous medicines partake in some measure of the nature of sorcerers, they are in danger from food nourished by the ash of that fire.[1] The important point here is that among the

[1] The associations made here will be developed in another book on Nyakyusa symbolism.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Nyakyusa generally it is kinship groups, not villages, which eat protective medicines with certain first-fruits.

Unlike many other cattle-keeping Bantu the Nyakyusa take great pride in cultivation, men boasting about their strength in hoeing, and praising those who are diligent. Significantly, the vocabulary relating to bananas matches in richness that relating to cattle: we recorded a dozen terms—and there were said to be many more—for varieties of bananas and plantains, which are distinguished by the form and flavour of the fruit, and thirteen terms for types of cattle, distinguished by colour and markings.

Not only does success in cultivation carry prestige in itself, but it provides the wherewithal for hospitality, on which status in a Nyakyusa community turns. To be respected a man must entertain his neighbours with food and millet-beer. Control of grain and vegetables to do this depends upon his own effort in hoeing, as well as upon having wives and sons to work with him. We have seen how the laggard among the Kukwe believes that the fertility of his gardens will be sapped by his neighbours being ahead. There is thus considerable social pressure compelling both men and women to cultivate diligently. At the same time, however, no individual should be too conspicuous. Each must keep in step in cultivation with his neighbours; and though his fields may be a little larger than the average, they must not be a great deal larger. The area cultivated (visible crops and stubble) by seven compound families on the Lake-shore plain in 1935 averaged 6·13 acres per family; which, divided by the number of members in each family, gave rather over half an acre per head (men, women, and children) or 1·3 acres per adult. The acreage ranged from 1·99 to 0·61 per adult.[1]

Cultivation thus involves co-operation primarily within elementary and compound families, but it also involves village co-operation, in that neighbours hold land together, help one another in some measure, and try to carry out each process simultaneously.

The pressure of neighbours still helps to keep laggards up to the mark, and also to keep the most energetic from getting far ahead. But the village control over cultivation is diminishing for, as we have seen, the custom of keeping in step is no longer strictly insisted upon even among the Kukwe, nor does it apply

[1] Monthly report of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu District, July 1933. Figures supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu, 1935.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 to those crops, production of which is now expanding—beans, groundnuts, coffee and rice—even though the latter is planted like millet in a seed-bed of ash. The cultivation of rice is on a commercial basis. A small number of men own ploughs which they hire out for preparing rice-fields, and the weeding and reaping is also often done by hired labour. For the hulling, grading, and marketing of coffee the Agricultural Department has established a coffee co-operative, to which all native-grown coffee is sold, but in this organization villages as such play no part.

d. Herding

231 857 476 In each village there are, as we have seen, several herd-groups, five to ten neighbours herding their cattle together. This association is voluntary, but it is usual for members of adjoining homesteads to co-operate—special friends in a village tend to build together—and the group is more or less stable. All the boys of appropriate age (six to eleven) go to herd, even though there is one son of their father already in the group, and when a man has cattle, but no sons of an age to herd, he may leave his cattle to be looked after by the sons of neighbours. As one old man put it: 'My cows are herded by other men's sons, but I give them neither milk nor payment, it is not done in this country. When I beget a son he will herd too.' There is thus considerable give-and-take between fellow members of the group. Among Christians, and those pagans who wish their sons to go to school, the herds take shifts, half attending the morning session of school, and half the afternoon session. Formerly, young men armed with spears herded the cattle for fear of raids, while boys herded the calves which grazed near the villages. The same young men used to herd and hoe, taking it in turn, or hoeing in the late afternoon when the cattle grazed near the villages and could be herded by the youngsters. The cattle were trained to follow the call of a herdsman and in case of danger were quickly led away and hidden.[1]

231 476 In the large villages of the plain an assistant headman, one of whose functions is the care of cattle, is connected with each herd-group. In his homestead, under the bananas, a smoky fire is kept going during the heat of the day, and there the cattle of the group

[1] D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., p. 121; F. L. M. Moir, op. cit., p. 93.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Economic co-operation beyond the village has therefore increased enormously, and this is correlated with a decrease in economic co-operation within the village. The change is most obvious in the case of migrant labourers who, while remaining members of their villages (for they are domiciled there) cease, during the period they are at labour centres, to co-operate with their village neighbours in building, herding, hoeing and hunting; and those of their wives who accompany them are also withdrawn from village activities.

Of the men in paid employment within the district, some, such as house servants, police, hospital orderlies, and clerks attached to the Government station, are very largely withdrawn from economic co-operation in their villages; and even labourers employed on European estates, who still cultivate for themselves, and those who meet essential expenses by growing cash crops on their own account, co-operate less with their village neighbours than was customary in the old days.

As we have seen there is no village co-operation in the production of the main cash crops—rice and coffee—such as there was in the cultivation of three of the main food crops; therefore those who grow cash crops spend a smaller proportion of their time working with their neighbours than their fathers did. Moreover, the cultivation of cash crops encourages the development of hired labour at the expense of work parties attended by neighbours. In effect, the cultivation of cash crops involves less village co-operation than did the traditional cultivation of food crops, and in so far as men's energies are directed into producing cash crops, village co-operation becomes relatively less important.

We argue that while traditionally there was considerable co-operation in production between fellow villagers, that co-operation is diminishing, and its diminution is correlated with employment for wages and the production of crops for sale. The more educated the individual the more time he is likely to spend working outside his village, and the less he co-operates in economic activities with his fellow villagers.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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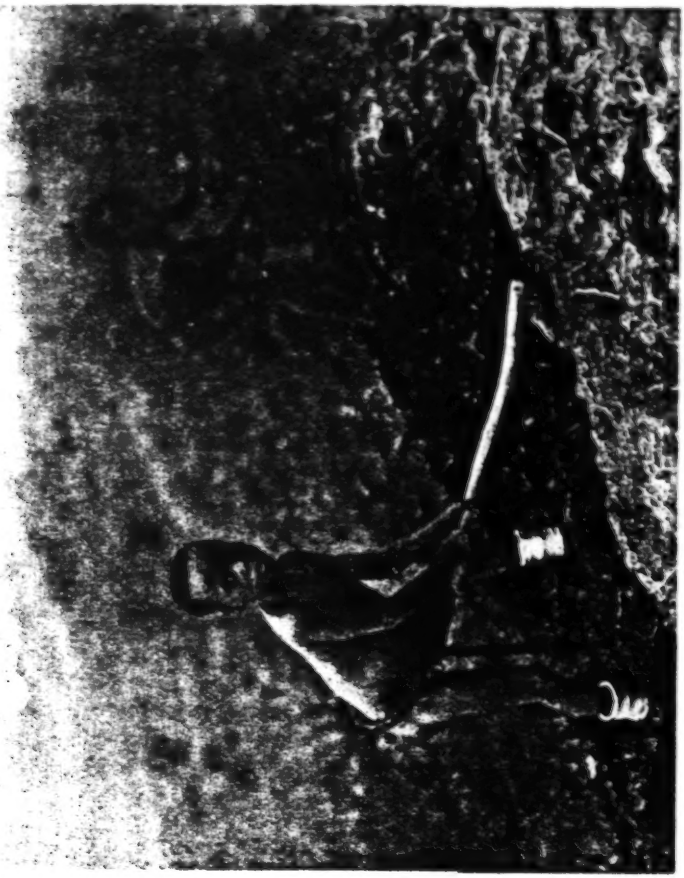


VII. A LITTLE GIRL PLANTING SWEET POTATOES IN HER MOTHER'S FIELD

[facing p. 66]

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

754 but also on the relationships to which they apply. While witchcraft,
789 'the breath of men', and the power of 'the defenders' are thought to operate primarily within the village and never beyond the chiefdom, sorcery, retaliatory and protective medicines may operate beyond the village and chiefdom as well as within them. Moreover, while the whole village, led by the headman, joins in defence against witchcraft, protective and retaliatory medicines are used primarily by individuals and families. Medicines of vengeance ('the horn' and *ilyepa*) are directed against kinship groups—members of an agnatic lineage, their spouses, and the children of daughters,-are all held to be in danger—not local groups. The next-door neighbours of a man attacked will be safe so long as they are not kinsmen or affines.

241 The one occasion on which the village or village-section, acting
789 as a group, uses medicines, is at the burning of rubbish heaps in the fields, before planting millet and certain other crops (*vide supra*, pp. 51–4). As we have shown, these medicines are supposed to protect the grain from witches and sorcerers, as well as to increase the yield. The Kukwe argue that the headman who lit the medicated fires must also be the first to taste the food grown on the fields, and he takes it with medicines, but this is not insisted upon by all the Nyakyusa; most commonly it is family groups that are careful to eat protective medicines with the first-fruits from their fields.

754 Envy is what makes men take to sorcery, the Nyakyusa say,
789 envy of another's riches, or power, or employment. As we have seen, envy is cited as a motive for witchcraft also. But it is not the sole motive. Greed is the primary cause (*vide supra*, p. 92). And while witchcraft can only be used to work off a grudge against a village neighbour, sorcery can be used against anyone. Like witchcraft, the effects of 'the breath of men' are said to be confined to the village. Moreover 'the breath' can only operate against a known sinner—it is the murmuring of neighbours about an individual which causes him to sicken; whereas most retaliatory medicines work against unknown persons, discovering the thief, adulterer, or sorcerer, as well as punishing him. As elsewhere in Africa, the use of sorcery and retaliatory medicines is said to be almost entirely confined to men, though women are often named as witches. In short, the situations in which sorcery and medicines of retaliation are used overlap at one or two points with those in

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

people say: '*Tukali ukunkesya unyuka* (We have not yet bidden farewell to the shade),' *ukukesya* being the word used for bidding a courteous farewell to departing guests. Mwaisumo elaborated the point. He said: 'The death ritual is a saying good-bye, it is to see off the dead man accompanying him on his way (*ukunsindikela*); to demonstrate that we have buried him indeed, and to pray that forgetfulness may now come on us.' Another informant explained: 'Touching the earth is to say "Good-bye, friend." '

The danger of madness was given as the reason both for the whole ritual and for many separate actions in it. 'You go mad if you do not shave after a death,' said the wife of the chief Mwaihojo. 'You go mad if you keep the hair of the corpse (*inwili sya mfimba*),' said Mwandisi, the old blind historian, and he went on: 'Yes, much madness comes from the shades if you have neglected the death ritual for a wife or for parents, and the ritual at puberty also. Madness comes from the shades and from Kyala. And if a woman refuses to perform the ritual for her husband who has died, and refuses to lie down with the heir, she also goes mad.' If someone does go mad the cause is usually said to be neglect of the death ritual or some mistake in its performance.

Other types of illness are also attributed to neglect of the death ritual. Kasitile was ailing and thought that his illness was due partly to the fact that he had not completed the death ritual for a relative. Mwilabe said of the sweeping in the ritual: 'They sweep round their legs lest their bodies become swollen and sick. It is said that their bodies will swell if they attend the ritual of someone else and this is done and they themselves have not been swept over.' Several informants mentioned 'a lingering and painful death' (a terror often spoken of by the Nyakyusa) as the penalty for neglecting a ritual, and the last part of the ritual is expressly interpreted as a prophylactic against the 'gasping cough'.

Finally, it is said that the crops will not flourish if the ritual is neglected. Kakuju, a village headman of Selya, was explicit on the point: 'If you do not bury your father properly the food will disappear. They (the diviners) will tell you to find something and when beer has been left overnight outside in the banana grove you pray to the shade.' The fear that the crops will not flourish is not mentioned so frequently as the danger of madness, but it is a general notion.

The danger of madness or other illness coming on one is thought to be greatest if a man tastes the ritual food or beer, or is sprinkled

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

131 Bukukwe, culminating, so far as the peopled regions
133 are concerned, in Tukuyu, five thousand feet above sea-level, the residence of the Administrative Officer and his staff, with Post and Telegraph Offices, and a large Government Hospital. Here also are many small trading stores, conducted by Indians and Somali; and a little to the south is the Kyimbila
[797] Station of the Scottish Churches Mission, carrying on the work of the exiled German missionaries. Still further to the south, and less elevated, is the British military post of Masoko.

The population of these fertile and healthy high-
361 lands is dense. From Tukuyu or Kyimbila, looking
101 south and west, numerous villages, each hidden in its banana grove, fill the view westwards to the Bundali Hills, where the Kibira River is marked out by a morning mist, and southwards towards the lake, thirty miles distant. In this region the people call themselves Nyakyusa, with a number of local names indicating no difference of origin or language. The
241 soil is so fertile, and the rain usually so abundant, that in many places two crops are taken annually of some foodstuffs, while of the others the single crop is so great that scarcity, no uncommon occurrence in some parts of Central Africa, is rarely experienced.

133 The Bundali Hills close in this happy valley (for in
101 spite of its elevation the country has the appearance of a valley) on the west; and beyond them, after a most exhausting march, over lofty summits, through deep ravines threaded by bridgeless rivers, one comes to the home of the Bandali, a race of hardy

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Government established a station at Lumbira on the lake shore, but removed later to Tukuyu. On the whole the new Government was well received. A rising in 1897 was so mercilessly dealt with that any discontent which might be felt was suppressed by the fear of the German machine-guns. Very slowly the district is being merged in the general progress arising out of European domination.

Around the lake shore cotton is being successfully cultivated by natives and Europeans. On the uplands near Tukuyu there are some coffee plantations, and the suitability of the soil for the cultivation of flax is being tested. Coal has been found in the hills to the west, but its commercial value has still to be proved; and a small quantity of mica is also being digged. Up in the north, on the Lupa River, but outside the Konde region, gold has been discovered, but apparently only in modest quantities. There are at present about three score of miners at work there.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

461 521 522 marriage settlement; the wealth some one has brought from the South; or perhaps they exchange impressions of Europeans they have worked for—a subject into which a great deal of humour can be packed; for it must not be imagined that the white man is taken too seriously. His little foibles, his often none too good temper, his haste to get a job done, and above all his cool assumption of unquestioned superiority, supply endless fun to the village joker. "Bantu as she is spoke" by some Europeans gladdens the weary hours for many a humorously inclined native.

241 572 Should the rains be late, the situation may be serious, for not only does the heat continue, but the harvest will be correspondingly late, and there is dark fear lest the supplies in the barns, intended to last until March, should have to do until April is well on.

[783] Public prayer is offered, led by the chief. The preliminary ceremonies have been attended to, and as soon as the first rains fall all sally out with the first streak of dawn to begin the year's work. From a score of small crofts one may hear the long happy shout of the men, and the shrill call of the women, as they toil in the early morning; but as the day advances and the heat increases, the shouting dies away, and every one puts the last ounce of energy into the task in hand. Henceforward, for about three months, the native gives all his attention to his crops; for as the season advances, and the grain begins to grow, the weeds come up also in wild profusion, and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

241 512 sheer hard work makes men and women look thin and haggard. Work stops about noon; the women go home to attend to the food, the men to see to the cattle which the smaller boys have been looking after during the day. The milking is always done by the men, [illegible] women's work as with us. If there are flies about, and there usually are, the cows need no invitation to thrust their heads into the column of acrid smoke that arises from a dung fire, kindled for the purpose. The rest of the afternoon is filled either with small duties, basket mending, net work, some slight repairs to a canoe, rope making, house repairing; or it may be there is a lawsuit to be settled, and every idler will make a point of being present.

231 512 [462]

512 [576] By the time food is over, night has closed in. If the night is dark, one after another slips away with a friendly "May you sleep well," and silence reigns until morning. Unless it is suddenly broken by the roar of a lion or the growl of a leopard; and then the young men, who sleep with the cattle, rush out with spears and clubs and wild shouting to drive off the intruder, while the others raise a weird cry within the houses. Should the lion take refuge in a thicket and refuse to be driven off, a small party may slip round to the nearest white man, if he is not too far away, to beg him either to lend them a rifle, or to come himself to their aid. In the warm moonlight nights, however, other noises fill the ear. The young people gather for a dance, and the drum fills the night air with its interminable tum tum tum, now soft and

512 535

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

231 a cow about to be delivered of a calf was rushed down to running water, and the calf, when delivered, immediately submerged. Then cow and owner ran for their lives, and when the scourge had passed over, the owner, if he survived, took the calf out of the water, resuscitated it, and let it go. The explanation given to me by a medical colleague of the conditions under which such a thing is possible, render it highly probable that if ever it occurred at all, it must have been very rarely, and even less in times of war than in times of peace. What is interesting, however, is the fact that the physiological possibility of it is known to the natives. I have not met anyone who has seen it done.

241 771 *Agriculture.*—St. Paul would almost certainly have told the Konde that they were "too religious"; not because he would have seen tokens of their religiousness in the streets and villages; no mere passer-by, and no indifferent foreigner, ever sees that. One must look deep, and live long among them, before that side of their life reveals itself to him with any fulness. There is hardly an act of theirs that is not accompanied by a ceremony of some kind, if that is religion, and to them it undoubtedly is. Agriculture is a highly religious occupation on that view, but hardly more so than many others. Leaving native Christians aside, [787] 241 782 the great majority of the people consult a diviner before beginning to hoe. He may say that all is well; or he may discover that some spirit stands in the way of a good crop, and must be propitiated; or that a certain piece of ground is bewitched, and no good will come of hoeing it until the spell has been removed.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

If a spirit is to be propitiated, beer is poured out and petition made as follows: 241 782

"Ye fathers, I am about to sow my seed. How can it grow if ye kill what I put into the ground? If ye are gracious to me, let me see the harvest."

Finishing his oblations with the usual squirting of water from the mouth, he next day sows his seed in confidence. If there are no obstacles from the spirits he does not pray. Why should he? There is nothing to pray about.

The ceremonies are practically the same all over the Konde country, but many chiefs have special practices of their own. A very picturesque ceremony is that of the chief Mwaisumo. When the early rains have fallen, and the ground has been hoed, chief and people go to the grave of the ancestral chiefs, carrying their shields of ox-hide. The chief and his headmen, standing in rows, raise their shields above their heads, and Mwaisumo, taking water into his mouth, squirts it upwards, and prays for a good harvest. Immediately all the people break out into rejoicing, dancing, shouting, blowing bamboo whistles, and drumming. The seed may now be sown. 241 782 622

The first hoeing is *ukusubera*, gathering the heaps of dry rubbish and burning them. But even this is not done without ceremony. Every man goes to the doctor to get medicine, which is put into the biggest heap in his garden; then, when the wife of the village headman has set fire to one of the heaps, which must not be one of those in her husband's garden, all the 241 789

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

241 789

other women take fire from the lighted heap, and kindle their own, first setting the torch to the large heap which contains the medicine, the virtue of which is carried to all the other heaps as they are set alight one by one.

There is a custom, now passing away, but still followed by a few, of throwing medicine into the ground as one hoes. Many use manure for fertilisation, but the medicines I am speaking of have no manure qualities. They are *sakota*, something possessing mysterious powers, the virtues of which are known by experience, but are not open to rational explanation. One of the best-known medicines of this kind is elephant manure, dried and set on fire, and the smoke allowed to spread over the garden. Where this is used it insures a bumper crop.

Not even yet, however, is all ready, for the seed must be doctored before being sown. A medium-sized basket is taken, and plastered on the inside with the drug, which, of course, has been obtained from the local doctor, who at this season does a roaring trade. Into the basket the seed is put, mixed with more medicine, and then sown. The object in this case is not, however, to secure a good crop, but to prevent the yield being interfered with. If even a sorcerer steals from that garden, he will sicken, and probably die; or a disease will eat up his lips, and he will stand revealed to all men for what he is, a garden thief, and, it may be, a sorcerer as well.

241 476

Working parties are often formed for the hoeing, the group spending one day in each garden, and being

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

fed by the owner in each case. When a headman's garden is being done, beer is provided, and the chief usually kills an ox when he has a party hoeing for him. The main crops are maize, cassava, millet, sweet potatoes, peas, beans, ground nuts, but many other food-stuffs are cultivated. Every village is hidden in groves of bananas, which need regular tending. Rice is grown for the market, and in the Kinga Mountains large quantities of wheat are cultivated. Every man owns his clump of bamboos; many have a few kapok trees, some mangoes, one or two lemon trees; and some European fruits are slowly spreading to native gardens. A few cultivate kitchen vegetables, but only for sale to the white man.

In a few places I have seen intelligently conceived irrigation, but never on a large scale, each man attending to his own needs in the matter.

Growing crops must be protected from numerous pests. Boys are stationed by day to drive off monkeys; straying cattle eating the crops involve their owner in damages: elephants, no rare visitors in some districts, are driven off by drum and horn and wild shouting when they pay no attention to the small sticks which are placed in a corner of the garden to keep them away. Pigs are very fond of growing maize; and where they are numerous, small huts, elevated on poles, are built in the gardens, and there the young men sleep and keep an open ear for the grunting which betrays the presence of the spoilers. Then one may hear the long shout of the watchers, who add to their shouting the rattling of dried gourds strung on cords

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

241 stretched across the garden, and presently the pigs clear off, and there is silence again. Many kinds of game get part at least of their living out of human industry, and have to be laboriously guarded against.

For smaller pests additional aid must be sought. Field mice and rats, *indafu*, a small locust-like creature, grubs, wireworms, and moles, work great injury, and ordinary methods of dealing with them are vain. Take, at sunset, a brand from the fire, and walk over the garden with it, singing "*Kuli Kyaubili?*" Where is the Unseen God? and the pests will clear out.

241 622 769 The first maize cobs are taken to the chief; then each head of a family presents a few cobs to his own ancestors; twins also must be presented with early cobs, and it is only then that common people are safe if they begin to eat the new season's crops. When the chief makes an offering to his ancestors, it is usually laid at the *lupanda*, the place where the village trees stand. The maize is eaten by mice, but it is credited to the "lion" which is the chief's guardian (Chap. V). In some districts a perhaps more primitive ceremony is observed. With a following of little children, the doctor goes to the grave of the chief's ancestors, and there roasts a few maize cobs, which he divides among the children; on their return, intimation is made that all may now eat the new crops.

251 The food stocks in the barns are protected by a medicine, but this practice is falling out of use, though many still follow it. If a man is too poor to buy the medicine, he begs a handful of the protected grain from his better-off neighbour, confident that the

4 Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

137 especially in the north, but as between 100 and 130 in. of rain usually falls annually, the country is one of the most fertile parts of Tanganyika. Two crops a year are often [132] grown on the same patch of ground. There is no tsetse, and cattle flourish. Parts of the country are stony and mountainous, others, especially the lake-shore plain, are of deep soil. On the higher ground there are many old volcanic craters filled with rich, moist soil, more fertile than the surrounding land.[1]

131 *Ngonde* country is bounded by Lake Nyasa on the east and by the Misuko hills on the west. It is mountainous except for a belt of low-lying country, about 6–10 miles 132 wide, along the lake shore. The whole district is well watered and well wooded except for some of the higher peaks and the lake-plains. Banana-trees are cultivated throughout the district. Game is plentiful. Average annual rainfall at Karonga in 1922–32 was 41·2 in. Average mean temperature was 74° F., seldom rising above 95° F.[2]

MAIN FEATURES OF ECONOMY

Cultivation

000 The *Kinga* are agriculturists, cultivating wheat, peas, and potatoes, and latterly also oats and barley. They own a moderate amount of cattle, and many sheep and goats. They are skilful smiths.[3] The *Kisi* and *Sandia* around the north-west coast of the lake are fishermen and agriculturists, growing some millet and maize.[4] The *Nyiha* are agriculturists and cattle-rearers; the *Lambia* do not rear much cattle; the *Ndali* have large herds, and cultivate bananas in the valleys.[5] The *Nyamwanga* keep sheep and goats and grow maize, beans, and millet.[6]

The *Matengo* have a system of hill-side cultivation of their own, which prevents erosion. When forced into concentrations in the caves in Litembo and Langiwo to escape the Ngoni raids, they developed the pit-system of hoeing: the grass is cut and laid in 2-ft. wide lines in a grid of 6-ft. squares. The hole in the middle of the square is hoed by a woman, who throws up the earth on to the grass squares. The crops are planted in the raised beds and weeds are thrown into the pit to rot, forming compost for the following year. After one season the pit becomes the raised bed and the beds the pit, and the system is repeated in following years. With proper succession of crops the gardens may be kept in use for ten years before fertility begins to fail. Maize, millet, and wheat flourish; root crops do not thrive under this system, nor does tobacco. The pit-system is now found mainly at Litembo, and is being abandoned elsewhere.[7]

● 241 The *Ngonde* and *Nyakyusa* are primarily cattle-rearers and banana-cultivators. They have a very similar culture, but only the latter has been described in detail. Consequently, the following summary refers to the Nyakyusa, unless the contrary is indicated.

The Nyakyusa practise subsistence agriculture by intensive cultivation with rotation of crops. As wide shifting cultivation is not practised, villages are relatively stable. They grow a great quantity of crops—maize, millet, sweet potatoes, beans, ground-nuts, cow-peas, cassava, and rice in the plain. Grass is hoed in for manure. The *Safwa*, in the Misuko hill area (Ngonde country), grow field-peas and wheat on a small scale.[8]

[1] Wilson, J., 1938, pp. 5–6.
[2] *Handbook of Common East African*, p. 64.
[3] Ibid., pp. 66–7.
[4] Pike, 1938.
[5] Murray, 1930, pp. 101–3; Dixey, 1928.
[6] Ibid., pp. 62–3.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Murray, 1930, p. 103.

4: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241 The use of cattle dung as manure is a novelty now used in the cultivation of coffee, but not on gardens unless land is beginning to be scarce. Banana cultivation is a characteristic feature of Ngonde as well as of Nyakyusa economic life.[1] Each homestead in a village includes the houses of a man and his wives, his banana groves, coffee-trees planted under the bananas, and also plots of beans, ground-nuts, &c. The main gardens of the household lie at some distance. Each year different types of gardens are hoed together by groups of villagers, millet in one place, maize and beans in another, so that the main gardens of any particular household are scattered. The clearing and hoeing fall to the man and his sons, and the wives are then given portions of their own to plant. Traditionally women never used to hoe at all.

The rights of a woman to dispose of her crops vary. Millet and rice, the two most valuable crops, are stored by the man and belong to him. The woman is the effective owner of all other crops on her plot, and stores them in her own house. Crops are used for food, beer, and hospitality, for making gifts, as well as for sale or barter, to obtain salt, pots, clothes, and cattle. There is a sharp division of property between co-wives. Not only garden land but also banana-trees are divided between them. The husband often keeps a separate plot of bananas and cassava over which he has full rights of ownership. The farming unit is the family, but communal hoeing parties are organized two or three times a year, food and beer being offered to the workers.[2]

243 On the lake-shore plain rice is cultivated. The Ngonde plain is the main rice-growing area of Nyasaland. Floods in the rainy season make possible the cultivation of lowland rice, or paddy, which is superior in yield to upland grown crops. The most fertile areas are usually flooded during the rainy period of December–April, so as to be unfitted for the cultivation of other food crops at that time. But the Ngonde construct huge mound-like ridges in their newly harvested rice gardens, and plant on them subsidiary crops—maize, beans, sweet potatoes, cassava, or cotton. When these are harvested the garden is levelled again in readiness for another rice crop. Harvesting of rice and winnowing is usually women's work.[3] The crops are stored when threshed but unhulled, or unthreshed. They are milled by pestle and mortar. The rice is marketed with Indian traders in Blantyre and Limbe townships.[4]

Cattle

231 Cattle take a foremost place in *Ngonde* economy, and milk is an important article of diet. Ngonde herdsmen were much in request in Shire province.[5]

Nyakyusa cattle are tied up at night in the dwelling houses,[6] and are herded in the day by small boys. Milking is invariably done by the men; the women are not allowed to have anything to do with cattle.[7] Every year at the end of the dry season, in October or November, some of the pastures are fired to bring out the new shoots at the first rains. This is the only use of burning in their economy.[8] The rinderpest outbreak of 1896 decimated the herds,[9] but since then the number of cattle has increased considerably, numbering over 33,000 head in 1931 and about 40,000 head in 1938,

[1] Murray, 1931, p. 222.
[2] Barker, 1934.
[3] Johnston, 1897, p. 431; Murray, 1931, pp. 223 and 229.
[4] Murray, 1931, p. 229, states that Ngonde cattle and herdsmen sleep together in long rectangular huts.
[5] Wilson, J., 1938, p. 8.
[6] Wilson, J., 1938, pp. 28–29.
[7] Murray, 1931, p. 226.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Johnston, 1897, p. 431.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

twenty miles from Lake Nyasa (1,500 feet). A little compact country, secluded until very recently from any effective external contacts, slightly over 1,000 square miles in extent.[1]

The soil, particularly that of the higher ground in the north of the Nyakyusa country, is not in itself very rich, but, as between 100 and 130 inches of rain usually fall each year, the district is one of the most fertile in the whole of Tanganyika; two crops a year are often grown on the same patch of ground, and the African population is over eighty to the square mile. There is no infected tsetse fly and cattle are the most prized possession of the Nyakyusa.

For historical reasons, which we will discuss in a later section, the Nyakyusa have never been united under any one paramount chief of their own, but live in a number (nearly 100 at the present day) of tiny but traditionally independent chiefdoms. For these chiefdoms the numerous streams which run down from the north into Lake Nyasa and the crests of the ridges of land between them, form natural boundaries.

The country, of course, is not all of equal economic value, parts of it are stony and mountainous, other parts, and particularly the plain in the south, consist of deep and level soil; and the population is heavier on the plain than on the higher ground. Further, on the higher ground, there exist numerous old volcanic craters filled with rich moist soil and these, being more fertile than the surrounding land, are particularly valued by the Nyakyusa. Again, of the two chief economic crops of this district, one, coffee, can only be grown on the higher ground while the other, rice, can only be grown on or near the plain. And at every point their system of land tenure is partially determined by such physical factors as these.

3. *THE USES AND VALUE OF LAND*

The Nyakyusa use their land for building on, for agriculture, for pasture, for hunting and fishing; they collect firewood, reeds, thatching-grass, mushrooms and other wild vegetables there; they draw water from its streams and bathe daily in them; on their land they grow bamboos, bananas, *imiyunguti* trees[2] and coffee; they keep bees; they dance, they fight, they walk and lie down upon it; their land is both the receptacle of refuse and the location of religious ritual, while their doctors continually wander over its surface in search of magical medicines.

Not all these uses of land give rise to laws, moral rules or conventions, but only those uses which tend to lead men into conflict with one another or into mutual embarrassment. The only reasons for the existence of

[1] The whole of Rungwe District is 1,866 square miles, but this includes the hills of the Ndali and Lambya as well.

[2] I have not been able to discover the botanical name of this tree.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

rules of land tenure are firstly to prevent, as far as possible, such conflicts and embarrassments from arising, and secondly, to facilitate their resolution when aroused. If, then, there is no danger of conflict or embarrassment neither is there a need for any rule at all. A Nyakyusa doctor wandering in the uncultivated bush looking for medicines cannot harm any man's interest, cannot hurt any man's feelings, and he is therefore free to gather what and where he will.

In many of its uses, however, land is scarce and so leads men into competition for it. When, in any society, land, or some other material of action, is scarce, we say that it has economic value; and whenever anything has economic value then, of necessity, its use *must* always be effectively limited and defined by rules of law or of morality or by convention, for only by such limitations of human action can anarchy be kept at bay and ordered human society continue to exist.

The scarcity or economic value of land is, in most of the Nyakyusa chiefdoms, more a matter of quality than of mere quantity. In some few chiefdoms there is, however, already threatening an actual lack of arable land, and it is almost certain that there will in time be a general shortage. The natural increase of population is to some extent counterbalanced by ever-increasing emigration into neighbouring, less densely populated districts; but rapidly changing economic and technical conditions will of themselves, in all probability, bring about a shortage of land. Ploughs (over 100 of them) are already in use and are multiplying many times over the area which one man can cultivate, while the recent development of an external market for surplus food is stimulating many men to greater effort even with the hoe. An area amply sufficient, with primitive subsistence agriculture, for about 100,000 persons may well prove quite insufficient when ploughs are employed and when to the 100,000 mouths are added, through the medium of the market, many thousand more. Rungwe District is already one of the main sources not only of labour but also of food for the nearby Lupa gold fields, while its rapidly increasing crop of Native-grown coffee now finds its way to Europe. In 1936 produce to the value of some £24,000[1] was sold by this district to the outside world.

At the moment, however, there is no general shortage of land. It is the *best* ground which is scarce, not land as such. The best building sites, the best plots of arable ground and the best pastures have economic value and their use is precisely defined and limited in the Nyakyusa system of land-tenure.

[1] Figure estimated for the whole district (Nyakyusa, Ndali and Lambya, about 150,000 persons in all) on the basis of information supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Office, Tukuyu.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Before passing on to consider how it is that the Nyakyusa distinguish between " better " and " worse " plots and pastures we must dwell for a moment longer on the technical aspect of their present use of land.

The *chitemene* system of agriculture so common in Central Africa has never been practised by the Nyakyusa, indeed the density of the population makes it impossible ; they follow instead a system of intensive cultivation with rotation of crops. Villages are thus relatively stable and a man may, if he chooses, hoe the same ground year after year for a whole generation, letting each plot lie fallow in its turn. The great variety of crops which can be grown helps to determine the success of the Nyakyusa rotation system—maize, millet, sweet-potatoes, beans, ground-nuts, cow-peas, cassava and, in the plain, rice being their staple products. The men hoe deeply, using a long-handled iron hoe, the women weed with the aid of a short-handled wooden digging stick ; different crops are planted at different seasons and most men do some hoeing in every month of the year. Every now and again a whole block of garden land that has been worked for some years may be allowed by common consent to revert to pasture. In the pasturing of cattle the most noteworthy point is the burning of the grass-lands ; at the end of each short dry season in October or November, some of the pastures are fired so as to bring new shoots of tender grass with the first rains. The houses of a village are normally all built close together, each surrounded by bananas, with the main garden lands at some distance from them. The cattle are tied up at night in the houses and their dung is removed each morning and thrown down among the banana trees by the women of the household. The deliberate use of dung as manure is a novelty but is now general in the cultivation of coffee ; on the gardens cattle dung is not used save in that one part of the district where land is beginning to be absolutely scarce, but the grass, which in this climate grows so quickly over them, is hoed in each year as green manure.

The first consideration which, in the case of arable land, leads the Nyakyusa to value some pieces of ground above others is a scientific[1] knowledge of the properties of different kinds of soil. " The men who are skilled in choosing ground for hoeing are those who have been long familiar with the soil. They know how soils differ and that one soil is best for maize, another for sweet-potatoes, one for peas, another for beans, one for ground-nuts another for pumpkins, one for millet, another for yams. And they can tell from the grass also, that where a certain

[1] By " scientific " knowledge is meant an intelligent understanding of fact based upon observation or experiment and which is not directly determined by any ultimate religious beliefs, save only the one belief that facts are intelligible.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Nyakyusa are, predominantly, a patrilineal people, for inheritance normally follows the male line. They differ, however, from the patrilineal peoples of Europe in that brothers inherit before sons. Inherited wealth is thus mainly kept in the hands of the older men, though they are under certain obligations towards their " sons " (whether own or classificatory) in their use of it. Marriage involves a transfer of anything from four to thirty head of cattle from the bridegroom to his father-in-law, and consequently the chief obligation which an older man has, both to his own sons and to the sons of any kinsman from whom he has inherited, is to provide them, in due time, with cattle for marriage. But this obligation is not an absolute one, it depends, in part, upon the due fulfilment by each " son " of his filial duties, which are, firstly, to hoe his father's fields diligently and, secondly, to maintain a respectful bearing towards him. Unmarried men have no gardens of their own, they work their fathers' land and eat the produce of it which their mothers cook.

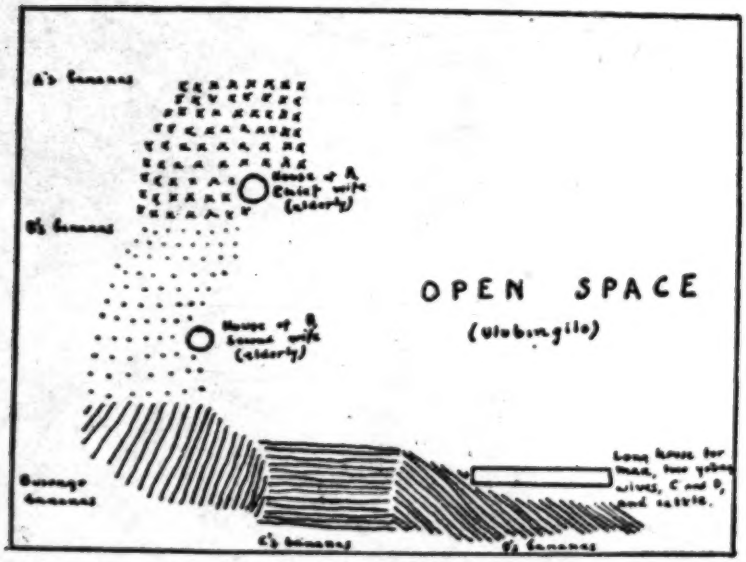
Under modern conditions money for tax and clothes is necessary both to father and son, and very many young men visit the nearby Lupa gold fields regularly, for periods of a few months at a time, to earn it. A youth who always brings back to his parents after each spell of absence tax money and some presents is held to have done all his duty and he will be given marriage cattle just as soon and as readily as if he had spent all his time hoeing at home. And if he earns more, sufficient to purchase some of his marriage cattle for himself, still his father benefits, for the old man has then to spend fewer beasts from his own stock. But the Lupa needs food as well as labour and some unmarried men stay continuously at home and engage in the production of crops; after the family needs have been met the surplus is sold and from the proceeds the father pays his own tax and his sons' and buys clothes for them as well.

Hoeing, which is the hardest part of Nyakyusa cultivation, is normally done by men, planting; weeding, reaping and cooking by women. But some women nowadays do some hoeing too—if their husbands are away at work or if for any other reason they find it difficult to get enough ground prepared for them. Traditionally, I was told, women never used a hoe at all.

Polygyny is the rule rather than the exception among middle-aged men, and in a polygynous household, as we shall see, each wife has her own gardenplots. The institution of polygyny has many other elements besides the economic, but the economic is not the least important of them: the taking of additional wives is the best capital investment which is open to an ordinary, uneducated, Nyakyusa peasant. A Nyakyusa wife is not her husband's property, she is his wife; but as family relationships are, among the Nyakyusa, the basis of economic activity, so the more wives

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Plan B



The Homestead of a Rich Man

Each married man has at least one house and, if he is a polygynist, he often has several; young wives may sometimes share a house, older wives normally have one apiece. The land immediately surrounding a man's houses belongs to him and his wives and will be referred to in this paper as their "building site" or "homestead" (*akaja*). Each homestead is sufficient in size to hold not only the houses of one man but also his bananas and, maybe, a few small plots of beans, ground-nuts or some other crop as well; and it is there, under the bananas, that coffee trees are planted. But there is no room on it for the main gardens of the household. In the centre of every homestead is an open space (*ulubingilo*) carefully weeded and swept by the owner and his wives, who usually take great pride in thus keeping it clean.

At some distance from the homestead—a distance varying from a few yards to two miles or more—lie the main gardens (*imigunda*) of the household, near those of other people. Each year different types of gardens are hoed together by groups of villagers; millet in one place, potatoes in another, maize and beans in another; so that the gardens of one particular household are scattered in different spots.

After the man and his sons have hoed the gardens, clearing the ground first if necessary, his wives are each given portions of their own to plant, weed and reap. In hoeing for any particular crop the land is

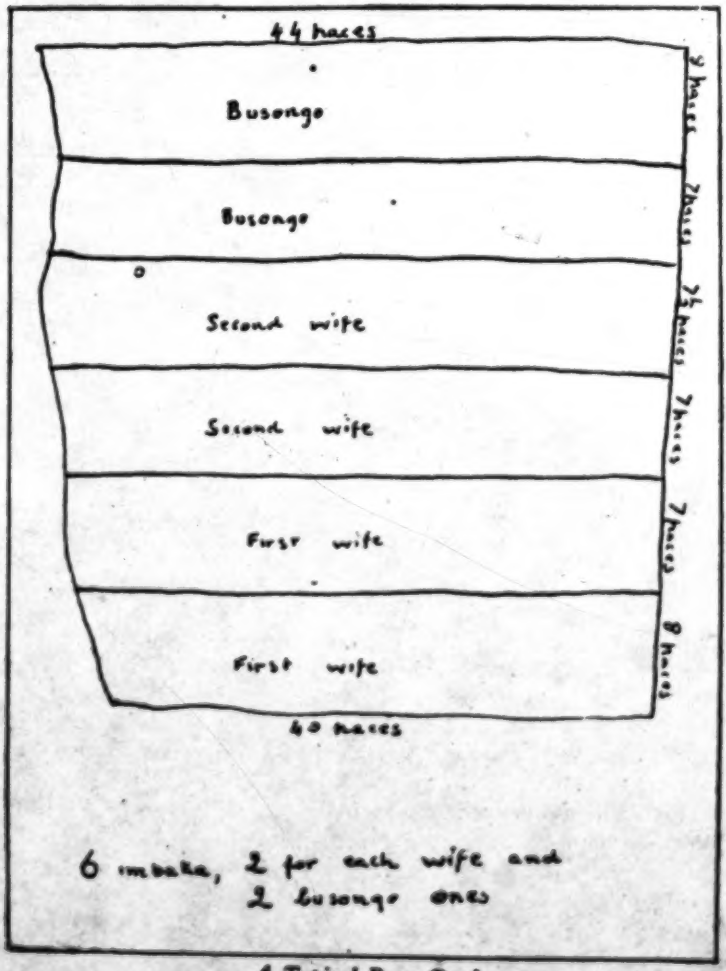
5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

241
592
421

divided up into separate plots (*imbaka*) all roughly of the same size, and one or two of these plots are assigned to each wife. There is no standard size for a plot (*ulupaka*), the only important thing being that there should be equality between the several wives of one man in the areas allotted to them.

The rights of a woman to dispose of the crops of her own gardens (*imigunda*), that is of the plots (*imbaka*) allotted to her by her husband,

Plan C



A Typical Bean Garden

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

vary in different circumstances. Millet and rice, the two most valuable crops, belong to the man and are stored by him; so that the division of a millet or rice garden into plots and their assignment to different wives is rather a division of labour than of property. But of all other crops the woman on whose plots they have grown is an effective owner. She stores them herself in her own house and no other wife of her husband can touch them; it is only with him that her rights are in any way shared.

The main use of the crops which the Nyakyusa grow is to provide food for each separate household group. Next in importance is the provision of food and beer for hospitality, and for the making of gifts both in everyday life and on special ceremonial occasions. And, finally, there is the barter or sale of surplus crops to obtain salt, pots, clothes, cattle and to pay tax. Each married woman, therefore, first uses her own crops to feed her husband, her own children and herself. If she is the only wife then she cooks for her husband every day, but, even if she is one of many, she is yet careful to cook for him frequently, in order to keep his affection and the various advantages which go with it.

When cooking for her husband she must, when necessary, prepare sufficient for guests, for a man very often has friends and neighbours eating with him; and if he wishes to make a gift of cooked food, she cooks it for him from her own store. To provide meals for him and his guests and cooked food for gifts is an obligation which she normally fulfils quite willingly, as we have hinted above; she may be fond of him; it is in any case to her interest to play her part in the co-operative relationship which binds them together and from which both alike benefit. He hoes for her and builds her house, he gives her a share of the household milk, which he himself controls, he sleeps with and is gentle to her; he has, without the aid of any legal, moral or conventional sanctions, a great hold over her, as she, on her side, has over him. But, if either fails to play their part in willing co-operation, then there are, for both alike, these other sanctions to fall back upon. A quarrel develops between them and leads to violence, perhaps he strikes her, perhaps she viciously repels him, one night, from her bed; and then the immediately injured party appeals to the neighbours for support. They discuss the matter, censure one or the other, and try to make it up between them; if they fail to do so the case may go to Court and one will then have to pay compensation to the other. Or it may happen, without any violent quarrel, without any formal appeal to the neighbours, that one of them becomes aware that his conduct is provoking their mockery and criticism; and then in shame he mends his ways. Or, finally, one of them may fall sick and suspect that wrong-doing on his part has been followed by spiritual retribution in the form of witchcraft.

A woman, then, uses her stores of food to cook not only for herself

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

586 mothers[1] in secret that she is in trouble and that her husband has no regard for her, that he grudges her garden plots and gives her only small ones. Then maybe her mothers will take the initiative in suggesting that she should leave this man who is no husband and who loves her not. And they will tell their husband, her father, that his child is in trouble and—only think of it!—has scarcely a ridge[2] to call her own. So that if the girl does then find life with her husband intolerable and leaves him, her father will not be too hard on his daughter, he will not compel her to go back to him; for he knows that she was in trouble."

421 626 754] This statement, written by an educated Nyakyusa, brings out very clearly both the fact that men do at times divide their land unfairly and the nature of some of the sanctions which operate against such injustice. The faith in witchcraft provides a moral sanction of which, if the man is fool enough to disregard it, he is very likely explicitly reminded in the course of the subsequent legal proceedings; the injured wife has an immediate hold over him in virtue of the relationship of practical co-operation and emotional intimacy in which they stand to each other, a hold which, if he attempts to break it by recourse to violence, is strengthened and given a legal form by the support of their neighbours. The support of her kin is an alternative legal force[3] which an injured wife

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[1] i.e. her father's wives.

● [241] [2] For many crops the ground is hoed into ridges.

[3] Some readers may be puzzled by and somewhat critical of the meaning with which the concept of law is employed in this paper. This is not the place to meet their criticisms, but, in order to avoid misunderstanding, it is necessary to define that meaning precisely. Law, then, is here distinguished alike from morality with its religious sanctions, from convention with its constraining sense of shame and from the reciprocity dictated by self-interest—with all of which it is in fact inextricably intertwined. Law is here taken to be that: normal or customary form of action in society which is kept in being by the inherent necessities of systematic cooperation among its members. The particular form of law varies in different areas of society in accordance with the particular conditions of each area; but some normal form of action there must be everywhere if social life is to continue; anarchy is, in the strictest sense of the word, impracticable. A breach of law is a course of action, on the part of some individual or minority group, which is inconsistent with the normal and accepted form of cooperative action, and which would therefore, if unchecked, make continued relationship between the lawbreakers and the other members of their society wholly impossible; it threatens to dissolve society into anarchy. But breaches of law are always in fact checked, as they must be, by the actions of those with whom the lawbreakers are in practice related; and it is those actions which are the sanctions of law.

If law is to be preserved it is necessary that the actions which sanction it should have an irresistible force, the lawbreaker must normally be helpless before them; and they are only thus irresistible if the great majority of those people with whom the lawbreaker is effectively related do in fact either participate in or at least approve of them. Now in civilized areas of society, in which vast numbers of people are related, legal sanctions must be applied by a central authority if they are to be effective, for only such a central

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Unmarried children have the right to food partly in virtue of their general relationship to their parents, partly because they themselves assist in the work of the household. From the age of about six years boys herd cattle, from about eleven years they begin to hoe; while girls help their mothers in field work, in the fetching of wood and water and in the care of infants. And, owing to their practical usefulness, there seems to be less difficulty in getting motherless[1] children regularly fed before they marry than in getting them entertained afterwards. Each such child is allotted to one wife and is mainly fed by her.

In some households unmarried sons hoe only the particular plots of their own mothers; but in others the man and his sons work together as a team, hoeing each plot in turn. In ten neighbouring polygynous households I found that in three cases the sons confined themselves to the plots of their own mothers, in seven the man and his sons worked always together. Meals followed the same pattern as the hoeing. In the three cases the mother of each boy alone provided him with food, but in the other seven cases his step-mothers did also.

This variation of custom between different households was thus explained to me: "The custom of hoeing separately, each boy for his own mother only, is sometimes determined by lack of friendship between the women, sometimes by the slackness of their husband in hoeing. If he is slack about hoeing then it falls to the women to organize it, and each calls on her own son to hoe for her alone; and, in that case, if one wife has no son she will just have to enlist the services of other people to hoe for her (rewarding their efforts with food at the end of each day). Sometimes too the custom arises in this way—a boy finds that his step-mothers are reluctant to cook food for him when he comes in from hoeing, he complains that while his own mother cooks for him generously they do not, and so he begins to hoe for his mother alone.

"The custom of hoeing together, on the other hand, is determined by the will of the man, who himself organizes it. And wherever a man is vigorous in hoeing there you will find that he and his sons all hoe together. It is only when a man is slack that the custom of hoeing separately arises from the orders of the women, and if the man is vigorous in hoeing his wives are never reluctant and ungenerous about cooking, they bow to his will just as his sons do."

When their husband dies women pass to his heir. If the heir is a brother of the dead man then he takes them all to wife, if a son he takes

[1] The custom of marrying two sisters and that of substituting a dead woman's sister or niece in her place considerably reduce the number of such "motherless" children, for the sister of a dead woman treats the latter's children as her own.

5:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1938 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

all except his own mother, whom he either builds for at a little distance and looks after, or else gives to a half-brother.[1] Inherited wives have the same land rights as others, and a mother for whom a son builds and hoes is treated by him, in the matter of land, just like a wife.

And a married man often supports an old woman[1]—a mother, mother-in-law or elder sister—whose husband, though still alive, is incapable of hoeing and who has no unmarried sons. He may either hoe for her on her own husband's land or else assign to her a plot or two of his own.

The gardens of a household are not only worked by its members, other people assist them from time to time. Each married man usually invites a group of his village neighbours to help him with a day's hoeing two or three times a year, entertaining them to food and beer after the work is over. A married woman likewise is often assisted by women friends from neighbouring households in the planting, weeding or reaping of her crops and then she rewards simply with a luxurious meal in the evening, without any beer. Again, as we have seen, a married woman sometimes engages a young man to hoe for her regularly, for a month or more at a time, and pays him by feeding him well for that period.

But although this last custom is still common it is beginning to decline; fewer men each year are willing to work for any length of time except for money, and already in some of the more prosperous households young men are found to be employed in hoeing at the rate of 2/- a month in addition to their food. The young men who thus accept employment in hoeing are always the poor ones, those for whom (whether because their fathers are poor in cattle or because they have many elder brothers before them) the prospect of getting married is too distant to stimulate them to any great diligence at home. In the plain of Mungonde, however, where ploughs are extensively used, the owners of ploughs make a considerable profit by hiring themselves out with their ploughs at 2/- a plot (*ukupaka*).

Kinsmen and affines also often assist in a household's hoeing. When a man inherits his dead father's wealth then he assumes the position of father towards his own younger brothers and is responsible for the marriages of any who are bachelors; they then hoe for him and are fed by his wives just as unmarried sons do. Sons-in-law, again, are expected to bring their friends now and then to help their father-in-law in hoeing and they often do so, more particularly if they are behindhand with the marriage-cattle. After the day's work is over, however, they are entertained just as sumptuously as an ordinary work-party of neighbours.

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[1] And any blackwoman of his mother (sister or niece) whom his father has married is treated likewise.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

643 652 The gardens of the Kyungu were divided traditionally into public (*imilasa*) and private ones (*imigunda gya masowo*). The produce of the first was mainly devoted to the entertainment of important guests—chiefs, territorial nobles and the ivory traders from over the lake. That of the second to the personal needs of the Kyungu and his household. 643 651 The public gardens were hoed and weeded by the great chiefs and the nobles of the Ngonde plain with their subordinates and followers, the private ones by the nobles of Ngonde with theirs.

The hoeing of his public gardens by the chiefs and nobles of the plain was as intimately connected with the religious status of the Kyungu as was the bringing of royal tusks to him, for the belief in his rain-making powers provided a moral sanction for it. Drought and disease, as we have seen, were often attributed to the displeasure of the living Kyungu; and the failure of some ruler to bring his people to work the public gardens was, so we were told, the most usual way of displeasing him. The wealth and the divinity of the Kyungu were inextricably linked. Nor without these public gardens could the lucrative ivory trade have been maintained. In the primitive world of Ngonde there were no "purely business relations;" tributaries and buyers alike had to be royally feasted.

643 651 565 622 In the hoeing of the public gardens the political hierarchy of Ngonde was made evident, for each great chief came separately to hoe, accompanied both by the local chiefs of his own house and by those territorial nobles who lived near him. At an appropriate time either the great chief or one of his noble neighbours would suggest going to Mbande to hoe, and the former would then summon all his local chiefs. But he could not summon the nobles; with them it was a polite arrangement between equals. "When they went to hoe for the Kyungu it might be a neighbouring noble and not the great chief at all who made the first suggestion; and then the two of them would go together with their followers. For the nobles are not subjects of the great chiefs but only of the Kyungu."

651 241 476 273 The main crop grown in the public gardens was millet (*amalesi*) for beer. And at some time during the year all the chiefs and nobles[1] who had brought men to hoe[2] them were summoned to taste "the beer of the malasa." So we see that, in one aspect, the hoeing of the public gardens of the Kyungu was but an extension on a large scale of the

[1] It is clear from our notes that each chief and noble brought to this beer-drink some of his people; but it is not clear whether he brought all those who had worked or only the more important among them.

[2] I speak of "hoeing" and "men." It is fairly certain that the women also came to weed afterwards and that they participated in the beer. We omitted, however, to find this out.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

ordinary custom of hoeing parties which is still followed by every chief and commoner in this whole area. Every man, two or three times a year, invites his neighbours to hoe for him and rewards them with a beer-drink in the evening. Where the hoeing of the Kyungu's public gardens differed from this custom was in the religious sanction behind it and in its political organization.

After the local chiefs had finished the *mulasa* for the Kyungu they would next return and hoe a small garden for their great chief who had led them to Mbande. But in this the territorial nobles took no part. Such gardens were not called *milasa* and there was no distinction made between them and the great chief's private ones. For this custom also there was a moral sanction; for the great chiefs, we remember, also participated in divinity. "If his people forget to hoe for Mwakasungula then perhaps a little local epidemic of some kind would break out and the diviners, when questioned, would attribute it to their forgetfulness. Or perhaps a prophetic fit would fall on some one and he would tell them to go and hoe (or they would rue it!)"

And, still lower in the hierarchy, among a group of chiefs who were half-brothers, the senior chief used sometimes to summon his juniors to bring their men and hoe; but "their acquiescence depended on their friendship for him"; it seems to have had no effective moral sanction.

The private gardens of the Kyungu were traditionally very small indeed, for the constant income of food from the plain made them all but unnecessary. Such as they were, they were worked by the people of Mbande, i.e. the nobles of Ngonde and their followers. The wives of the Kyungu lived like ladies and had all the normal work of a woman, including weeding, done for them.

The income of the Kyungu in slaves and cattle cannot be understood save in the context of judicial procedure and warfare with which we have not yet dealt[1].

The income of Mbande reached others besides the Kyungu and his wives. We have already seen how the nobles of Ngonde took their share of the food which was brought in; and some of it they gave to their messengers, the *walakota*. Neither the nobles of Ngonde nor the messengers, according to the present Kyungu, used to have any large gardens of their own; they also were maintained at the public expense. And the nobles of Ngonde shared also in the proceeds of the ivory.

With the exception of a pile of tusks upon which the Kyungu slept, most of the ivory which reached Mbande, from the time of Mwangonde

[1] Vide infra sections 5 and 6.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

as they do, in their behaviour and their mutual relationships to a common type. Space forbids such an undertaking here; and it is necessary to emphasise that, although the most significant facts are described in an orderly manner, and although certain reasons for these facts are indicated in their specific character and in their connections with one another, yet these reasons are not fully or systematically worked out, and the result is a description which leaves the facts only half-explained. And, in so far as this society is not here fully analysed, so it is not yet fully comparable with others. The reader of this paper will detect many points of similarity and of difference between Nyakyusa society and some other with which he is familiar, but the comparison cannot be made to yield any propositions about the nature of human societies in general until the facts of both have been fully explained in terms of their particular social, cultural, and external conditions.

Climate, Cultural Groups, and European Contact.

The Nyakyusa live in the Rungwe District of South Tanganyika in the Rift Valley at the head of Lake Nyasa. The valley is dominated and closed at its North end by the recently extinct Rungwe volcano, from whose foot the land, starting as an upland plateau 5,000 ft. above sea-level, tumbles southwards for twenty-five miles in a broken cascade of hills, to level out in a plain fifteen or twenty miles from Lake Nyasa. The Lake is 1200 ft. above the sea. The East wall of the Rift rises to 10,000 ft. or more in the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains, but the West wall is two or three thousand feet lower. The climate is very wet, for about 130" of rain fall each year, and, at 9° South of the Equator, is also very hot. The rain and the sun together make the land extremely fertile; the district is thickly populated (over 100 to the square mile), famine is rare and the Nyakyusa are far better fed than most of their neighbours. Rice was introduced into the plain by Arabs, coffee by the German Missionaries in the hills, and these two crops to-day, under the enthusiastic care and guidance of the Government Agricultural Department, bring to many Nyakyusa a small but steadily increasing cash income.

Their main foods are bananas, maize, beans, sweet potatoes and a variety of greenstuffs, together with meat and curds from their cattle. Millet is extensively grown and is used both for making beer and for eating in the form of porridge.

The name *Nyakyusa* is nowadays used by themselves as a general name for all those who have similar speech and customs and who live in Tanganyika; but formerly it only covered those who live in the South of the district, in the plain and up in the hills as far North as the administra-

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

583 Normally a bachelor is given cows one by one, over a period of years, and, as we have seen, he sends them, as he receives them, to the father of the girl he wants to marry. One cow is sufficient for betrothal, but not until he has given three can he begin openly to sleep with her. And he cannot usually set up his own economy until he has given at least three cows and she has reached puberty and been initiated. He may of course bespeak an already grown girl, but if he engages himself to a young one he is expected to bring two or more bulls as well, during the course of her initiation.

684 If he chooses to spend his cows in adultery fines, he may, but he will then have to wait longer to get married.

582 561 Thus the system of marriage by a transfer of cattle is, in this society, directly linked with a late marriage age for young men and with a privileged position for older men. When a boy gets cattle he at once gives them to an older man in order to secure his daughter as a wife; the labour of every bachelor helps to increase his father's wealth in food; it is in general the older men alone who can afford more than one wife. And there is an average difference of ten years or more in the initial marriage age of men and girls. The tax registers show in part of the district, among 3,000 adult* men, 34% bachelors, 37% monogamists, and 29% polygynists; and investigation proves that, generally speaking, it is the young men who are bachelors, the men over forty-five who are polygynists.

[162]

511 574 Though cattle are their most valued form of wealth, it is on agriculture that the economy of the Nyakyusa is primarily based. Meat and milk are luxuries, and daily bread comes from the fields. Hard work in a fertile country provides food for each family, and the millet beer which is the ordinary material of hospitality. Hospitality brings a man prestige and authority among his fellows; on the possession of sufficient food largely depends the contentment of his wives. And in the production, preparation and eating of food the relationships of the family and of the individual family within it, are clearly visible.

241 512 Hoeing is the work of men, planting, weeding, reaping and cooking is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a.m., on the upland plateau they begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different

*Presumed to be 18 years or over.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done.

In a polygynous family each wife has her own fields (*imbuka*), hoed by her husband and her own sons, which she plants, weeds and reaps with the help of her own daughters, and the produce of which she uses to cook for her husband, her own children and herself. The relative rights of husband and wife to dispose of produce vary with different crops, but no co-wife has any rights over a woman's food. She may, and often does, ask her co-wives to help in her fields and sends them presents of cooked food from her own fire, she may help them and receive presents in return; but they have no rights over her fields or her food, only her husband and herself. And the fields which are hoed by a bachelor son belong to his own mother, who in her turn cooks food for him to eat.

Each wife has either a hut to herself, or else a separate alcove in a large hut, and there she has her fire for cooking. She fetches her own firewood and water or sends an unmarried daughter for them.

At meals the ages and the sexes eat separately: in some polygynous families each wife sends a dish to the husband, in others the wives take it in turns to cook for him. The husband eats alone or with neighbours of his own age[1] to share his dish, the older boys and their friends[1] eat separately from the younger children, and each mother again usually eats with her own daughters, apart.

In the relationship of husband and wife the chief elements are sexual intercourse, co-operation in work, the procreation of children and factors of personal inclination, character and temperament. By men women are praised for sexual skill, cleanliness and beauty, for good cooking and hard work, for their fecundity, and for gentleness of speech and behaviour, and those with opposite qualities are criticized. Among women men are praised for sexual skill and attentiveness, for vigour in hoeing and skill in house-building, and for kindness; while sexual neglect, laziness, impotence and cruelty are disliked and may cause a woman to leave her husband for another man.

The birth of children is a most important factor in the marriage relationship, for children are greatly desired both by men and women. They are desired for themselves and also because they bring their parents wealth and prestige; a boy will one day work in the fields of his father and mother, a girl will bring in cattle from her marriage. And the possession of children brings compliments and respect both to man and woman.

[1] Vide infra "The Age-Villages."

9: Wilson E-S (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kinga FN12

two peoples are distinct. Their languages are not mutually intelligible and the Nyakyusa despise the Kinga as dirty in habit and obsequious in manner. There were two main invasions from BuKinga: (i) that of the 'sons of Lwembe' who settled south and east of Tukuyu, and (ii) that of the 'sons of Ngomale' (or Kukwe), who settled first at Kina below the northern crater of Rungwe volcano, and then at Kabale in the foothills to the south-east. Most of the present chiefs of the Nyakyusa belong to one or other of these two lineages, and the chiefs of Ngonde are claimed by both. The arrival of the chiefs of Lwembe's line may be fixed between 1560 and 1650, i.e. before the settlement at the Cape, but after the death of the first Christian martyr in what is now Rhodesia[1] and the 'sons of Ngomale' followed them some generations later (*vide infra*, genealogies pp. 3, 97; p. 94). Two of the invading heroes, Lwembe and Kyungu, became 'divine kings' whose successors claimed spiritual authority over wide areas, and the heirs of Kyungu gradually acquired temporal power also.

About the first inhabitants of the Nyakyusa valley, the *abilema*, tradition is vague; however, it is clear that they were not one people, but consisted of small, scattered, independent groups, disparate in origin. Some were very early invaders from BuKinga, others came from near Lake Rukwa and were kin to the Bungu of the Rukwa plain. They occupied an almost empty country (as their name indicates) but they found pygmy hunters[2] in the Rungwe forests. The invaders themselves were primarily hunters and honey-gatherers, though some, at least, of them began to cultivate millet, beans, and pumpkins. One group of early inhabitants, the Penja, which was pushed into the north-west corner of the valley, has remained relatively discrete, though for the most part they have fused with the conquerors.

It is clear that nowhere were the invaders allowed to establish themselves as tyrants since, though their descendants rule over the various chiefdoms, their authority is strictly limited by the headmen of the villages who are invariably of commoner stock. Moreover, while the most sacred persons in the country are, or before the coming of the Europeans were, 'divine kings', descendants of the original heroes, chosen by each generation to become their

[1] In 1561, cf. G. M. Theal, *Records of South-East Africa*, vol. ii, p. 168.

[2] The quality of relations with the Pygmies is summed up in the ironical name for them: 'Where did you see me?' (Undamonilaga?) The rule is that they were very sensitive about their size and the first question on meeting a Nyakyusa was always: 'Where did you see me?' The only safe reply was: 'Yes, far away!'

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

priests to sacrifice to his father and elder brother so that fertility may return and men may eat sweet potatoes, but he does nothing.

A conversation between Kasitile and Mwanyoso, his fellow priest (*vide* p. 76), was also instructive on this point:

> The soil has changed, we are not like those of old, we are different. Mwakisambwe (30) had power; when he prayed the thunder crashed and rain fell in torrents. In the old days when the Kings came they came with drums and we all feared them, what they said was done—they did not have to say much—just a few words and it was done. But now they spend all their time explaining things and talking and we do not do anything. . . .
>
> MWANYOSO: I have sent people time and again to Mwaijande (7) for a cow, but he just insults us. . . . I have asked Mwaibojo (147) about celebrating. . . .
>
> KASITILE: What did he say?
>
> MWANYOSO: I don't know . . . if he is wise . . .
>
> KASITILE (*breaking in*): Well, you had better admit that the chiefs do not respect you—the chiefs say: 'It is European times now.'
>
> G.W.: What do they fear? The Government does not affect the ritual, does it?
>
> KASITILE: They are unwilling to part with the cows which I take for sacrifice, they do not like to lose their cows. In the old days they feared, and when we said: 'We do not sleep, celebrate in the grove', they agreed quickly, for they feared that we, their men, would move to another chiefdom.

(5) THE FIRST FRUITS

No communal ritual of the first fruits is celebrated among the Nyakyusa as in Ngonde,[1] but after the millet harvest a little grain is collected from every homestead and later brewed into beer which is offered to the shades of the chief. In Mwaipopo's country the offerings of millet were collected by the priest, Ngulyo, who, with his colleagues Kimegwa and Njobokosa, took it to Kalinga, senior widow of the late chief (113). She was custodian of a sacred pot inherited by the chief from his predecessors, in which the offerings of millet are stored, and this is the pot which, according to some informants, also contained the power of growth—the nails and hair torn from the dead chief (*vide supra*, pp. 64-5). When the new crop was reaped Kalinga almost emptied the pot, refilled it with the fresh grain, and brewed beer with the old. There had once been a sacred winnowing basket used in preparing the beer, but

[1] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Njoroh*, p. 40.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

and achievement. An account of the treatment of a field for protection against wild pig emphasizes this.

If people wish to protect a crop from wild pig they go to a doctor to ask for medicine. When he gives it to them he tells them that there must be no quarrelling in the home after they have barricaded the field. Four women go to the field with the husband of the one who cultivates it. They go after sunset. One women is shaved; her head is a symbol of the garden devastated by pig. A second woman, who keeps her hair, ties a head-pad on her head and carries bananas with medicine. She enters the field and eats the bananas. The husband climbs a hill at a little distance, and two of the women go into the long grass close to the field. The bald pate twists a head-pad and the one with hair smears it with medicine and as they do so they look towards their husband and abuse him saying, 'You lay with your mother', and he swears at them saying, 'The leather aprons of your fathers' . . . and many other insults. Then the women walk round the edge of the field, sprinkling medicines, and they go out the way they came in. The circular pad is a symbol of the barricade placed round the field. When they return home they do not eat but go to sleep hungry (though the clever ones eat beforehand). If they quarrel, the pig finishes the food. It is as if quarrelling destroyed the fierceness, the power, of the protective medicine; you must put aside all quarrelling that the medicine may be powerful. If the pigs come it is as if there were a quarrel, as the woman and her husband quarrel in the field mimicking the pig. The husband on the hill is like the pig approaching the field, his wives in the long grass also represent pigs. . . . The husband and his wives quarrel only in the field. If, when the maize is ripe, the husband bears one of his wives for *any* cause she does not go to pick the maize herself, a friend picks it for her. If she goes in her anger she finds the maize finished, nothing but earth is left.

Here the link between medicines and morality is made plain. Quarrelling weakens medicines of all sorts and renders them ineffective. But a mimic quarrel between husband and wives in the fields renders the medicine effective. It represents the battle between the pig and the medicines. There is a suggestion elsewhere (pp. 69, 113) that pigs are *sent* by the shades when kinsmen or neighbours quarrel, but in the account just quoted it is implied that quarrelling in the home directly injures the medicine.

In themselves, many medicines are neutral. They may be put to good or evil ends, but because they are mysterious and powerful, they are feared, in the same sort of way as atomic energy is feared in contemporary society. Men use medicines themselves 'for purely peaceful purposes', but they are shocked at

Ilr:Gulliver R-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F'017 Ngonde F'017
Nyakyusa

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1

In many areas of Eastern Africa the pressure of peasant populations on their tribal lands is a critical feature of the contemporary scene, and this is most especially so in the more fertile parts where the African has accepted the new cash economy and is beginning to appreciate the potentialities of the modern world. The situation has been highlighted recently in the public mind by the publication of the Report of the East African Royal Commission[1] which examined the economic conditions of our time and made general recommendations.

In Tanganyika the overall density of population is low (22 persons per square mile) and the general scale of economic activity still remains little above subsistence level over vast areas of Territory. There are, however, islands of extremely dense populations scattered through the country, often associated with the mountain areas, where soil is fertile, rainfall is reliable and adequate and the cultivation of crops for sale in world markets has gone ahead fairly easily. These populations still comprise peasant farming communities with little capital and their "natural" impulse is to expand their extensive agricultural system rather than to intensify their cultivation on existing holdings. Serious overcrowding were results for the favourable areas are limited and surrounded by drier bushlands. African attitudes and legal customs concerning their land do not change quickly and they lag behind new conditions of physical limitation and economic development. Whilst the recommendations of the Royal Commission may be valuable in the establishment of general policy, it is obvious that detailed application through time demands a fairly exact knowledge and understanding of particular local conditions if it is to be reasonably successful. This is particularly the case in so large a country as Tanganyika, with its multiplicity of environments and tribal systems of law, land tenure and agriculture, and the social attitudes which encompass them.

The present essay is an attempt, sponsored by Government, to describe and analyse the land and population conditions in one small area of the Territory where a cash economy is emerging and where the pressure of a peasant population on its land resources has become acute. It is hoped that some of the account may be applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to other similar areas both in Tanganyika and elsewhere, and that the conclusions reached may be helpful in dealing with the problems there; but primarily this is a study of one particular part of the country in order to provide the information upon which detailed policy may be founded.

The Nyakyusa are not entirely typical of many of the Bantu people of East Africa for they have a most distinctive social organization, peculiar to themselves, based on age-villages and party independent chiefdoms. Also, they inhabit a country whose annual rainfall is unusually high, averaging almost 100 inches. On the other hand, these people are one of the very few in Tanganyika for whom we have an excellent account of both their pre-European and early European systems of land tenure. Based on this information, obtained before modern changes began, we can perceive, analyse

1. East African Royal Commission 1953-5, Report, H.M.S.O. 1955, Cmd. 9475.

161 If therefore, pending the next Census to be made in 1957, we assume these rates of increase, then by 1955 it may be estimated that the Nyakyusa numbered about 217,000 at an average density of 233 persons per square mile, allowing 13.7 acres of land per family of five. For the Lake Plains alone, the population in 1955 would have been nearly 60,000 at an average density of 287 persons per square mile, with 11.2 acres per family. If we also include the estimated number of absentee migrant labourers in the base year of 1948, then there were in 1955 perhaps 63,000 people dependent on the land resources of the Lake Plains at an average density of 303 per square mile, though in fact some 6,000 men were temporarily absent from home in that year.

The figures and estimates are given in Table I. These averages do, of course, hide some considerable and significant local variations which are further described at pages 14 ff. below.

TABLE I
NYAKYUSA POPULATION

162

	1948 Census			1955 Estimates		
	a	*b*	*c*	*a*	*b*	*c*
Lake Plains at increase of 1% p.a.	53,700	260	11.9	59,700	287	11.3
Central Region at increase of 1½% p.a.	48,500	224	14.2	53,800	248	12.9
N.E. Highlands at increase of 1½% p.a.	40,300	183	17.4	44,700	203	15.8
N.W. Highlands at increase of 1½% p.a.	33,200	185	17.3	39,000	201	15.6
Nyakyusa in tribal area	197,700	212	15.2	217,200	233	13.7

a = population
b = persons per square mile on land available for African use.
c = average acreage available per family of 5 persons.

Assuming that there were in 1948 about 3,000 men temporarily absent from their homes in the Lake Plains but who remained dependent on the land resources of that region, then the following estimate may be made:-

Lake Plains – persons resident at home and temporarily abroad:-

a	*b*	*c*	*a*	*b*	*c*
58,700	282	11.3	62,935	303	10.6

The approximate areas available for African use in the tribal lands (excluding alienated land, forest reserves and main roads) are:-

Lake Plains – 208 sq. miles
Central Region – 217 sq. miles
N.E. Highlands – 220 sq. miles
N.W. Highlands – 288 sq. miles
BuNyakyusa – 933 sq. miles

In these calculations no account is taken of unusable land such as swamps, steep slopes, thicket, etc.

Cash Cropping: Paddy Cultivation

433 432 This condition of a high density of population exists in a modern economy in which cash-cropping is universally accepted and desired. Under the former subsistence agriculture, because of heavy rainfall and natural annual flooding, quite small-sized holdings were adequate to satisfy a family's food requirements. Two harvests a year are easily obtained in some combination of maize, beans, groundnuts and finger millet, with a few small "luxury" crops; and the banana grove yield continuously. The Nyakyusa were and are extremely fortunate in their food supply, and seldom experience shortages such as occasionally or even commonly afflict many peoples of East Africa.

241

243 [249] Rice was first introduced in 1896 by two chiefs who obtained the seed from Nyasaland Angoni; and in 1898 the Moravian Mission and a Swahili

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the river is spate during the wet season, although here and there a few plots are cultivated on slightly raised ground. Similarly in Kapugi village, Korowe's chiefdom, some parts are heavily inundated by the Kiwira river. In both these cases flooding has made unusable ground which was cultivated and even built on a generation ago; the degree of annual flooding seems to be decreasing again now so that very slowly a certain amount of new land is becoming available. This cyclical change appears to be directly connected with the long-term rise and fall of the level of Lake Nyasa. On the other hand, in more fortunate villages such as Ikoio, Mwakyusa's chiefdom, and Kapugi, Mwamasangula's chiefdom, there is rather more common pasturage remaining, and village sites, paths, etc., are noticeably less restricted.

The following arithmetical observations may be noted as permitting, perhaps, some guide to population densities in the Lake Plains:-

Persons per sq. mile	*Total acreage per family of five*	*Arable holding per family of five if proportion of total land under arable holdings is:—*	
		one-third	*two-fifths*
300	10.7	3.6	4.3
400	8	2.7	3.2
500	6.4	2.1	2.6
600	5.3	1.8	2.1

(N.B. The statistically average family is composed of five people)

It has been suggested by the Agricultural Field Officer, Tukuyu, that for the whole of Rungwe District perhaps 30 per cent. of all land is under cultivation. He was not prepared to place any reliance on this figure, and certainly for the Lake Plains it must be higher.

To summarise my own tentative conclusions and in order to obtain some kind of picture of the current land situation, I suggest the following division into regions:-

A. The flood plains proper

1. Very **high-density region** – the arable land available under present conditions amounts to about 1½-2 acres per adult male and the local density of population is probably in the region of 500 persons per square mile; – in most of the chiefdoms of Mwenelusoma, Korowe and Lazarus, the south-eastern part of Mwakipesile's and the eastern part of Mwakyusa's chiefdoms.

2. **High-density region** – there is available about 3 acres of arable land per adult male and the local density of population is between 300 and 400 persons per square mile; – in the chiefdoms of Mwamasangula, Mwanyilo and Mwakilima, the southern part of Mwakilasa's, the centre of Mwakyusa's and much of Mwandemutale's chiefdoms.

B. The remainder of the Lake Plains (Ntebela)

3. **Low-density region** – here there remains much vacant land (some usable, some scarcely usable) and population density is probably little over 100 persons per square mile, and even lower than that in the most northerly parts; – the northern, higher areas comprising the north of Mwakyusa's (Mwisale's) chiefdom, the remainder of Mwandemutale's, the whole of Mwanzipesile's, Mwakatumbe's and Mwakipesge's chiefdoms, together with the northern part of Mwakipesile's and of Mwakilasa's chiefdoms.

This summary description is, and can be, only very approximate, taking no account of the complexity of local variations to be seen on the ground. It is illustrated in the accompanying sketch-map.

It may be emphasised that in the two high-density regions practically all available land is in use. In the "high-density region" (No. 2 above) it may be possible to reduce slightly the non-productive areas taken up by village sites, but nowhere will this be easy or even desirable, and already most of the vacant spaces between houses are packed with banana groves, small

10:Culliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

plots of maize, squashes, tobacco, etc., and useful trees (bamboo, citrus-mango, kapok, soyaupaut and firewood). Artificial drainage would, of course, make more land available along the rivers, but this is in general beyond the abilities and resources of the Nyakyusa without considerable outside assistance.

Finally, in this matter it is to be remembered that in addition to a man's arable holding, each of his wives has a banana plot at her house from which she obtains her staple foodstuff. Such plots amount to perhaps about a tenth of an acre on the average. On the other hand, the Nyakyusa are no longer prepared to tolerate a predominantly banana diet. Rice has, in most areas of the Lake Plains, become almost as important as bananas.

Large-sized Holdings

Some blame for this novel shortage of land and the smallness of the average holding has often been laid upon that minority of Nyakyusa who have exceptionally large holdings, and also upon the immigrants from beyond the Lake Plains who have come to settle there during the past decade.

The occupiers of large-sized holdings are rather fewer than has sometimes been supposed. The notoriety of large land-owners, such as some of the modern chiefs with as much as 25-30 acres, has brought more attention to them than is really warranted. Most chiefs and village headmen have arable holdings of above average size, as a result of their privileged positions in the land allocation system and because of their prestige influence; but they remain a small minority and their number is bound to decrease in the future as inheritance causes sub-division of their holdings, for most of them have also more than the average number of wives and sons. In the two high-density regions it is clearly impossible for any man much to increase his present holding. As will be shown later (see page 24) the modern trend is not unnaturally towards a dangerous fragmentation of holdings.

The data obtained in this matter for my eight village samples are summarised in Table III, page 15. In those villages the two men out of 372 who held more than ten acres were a village headman and the father of a chief.[1] There were seven other headmen and one chief as well as some other locally influential men amongst the people covered by my surveys, but none of them held more than ten acres. There are, of course, some commoners amongst the large land-holders; many of them are close relatives of the chief or headman and have thus received preferential treatment. Some, however, are ordinary villagers who were perspicacious enough to see future trends and to obtain land in the early days before most men realised its new value and when vacant areas were still easily available. Such men are tending to become a new, wealthy class, but on the other hand they are particularly susceptible to the begging of kinsmen and friends who have insufficient land. If they are not to be regarded as unneighbourly or even anti-social (perhaps practising witchcraft) they are virtually compelled to be generous sometimes, both with their land and with their profits.

On the whole this minority of men excites little attention or jealousy among the Nyakyusa, who indeed take it for granted that their chiefs and headmen will have more land than ordinary villagers, as befits their status and prestige. If it be thought that by reducing somehow the size and number of these unusually large holdings then the land shortage might be partly relieved, it is a false hope. I scarcely think that the Nyakyusa would welcome any such attempt at interference by administrative action, but in any case it would only provide minor and temporary relief here and there and would not be worth the executive difficulties involved.

1. This second man should be a chief himself but he was dismissed by Government on his appointment for misconduct. He still holds much of the prestige and privilege of a chief but he lacks a duly delegated authority to punish from government offices.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955)1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

production, young men seeking their own independent holding, and newcomers to the villages who seek to settle there.

The modern shortage of land has therefore considerably increased the authority and the activities of the village headman. Nowadays he is the prime mover in all changes in land-holding, other than by inheritance or temporary loans and gifts. In these latter, and particularly in inheritance, he has necessarily become an important interested party whose influence cannot be ignored, whose approval is desired and whose assistance is frequently sought both as arbiter and witness. Much more than before, and directly because of the scarcity and value of land today, he is the principal controller and allocator of land – though, of course, he remains subject to the state of public feeling and the opinions of his villagers. His position has been further strengthened by his status at the base of the administrative hierarchy in modern local government, whereby he is given executive responsibility for his village and its people. As always, disputes over land are taken before him in the first instance and here he acts not only as a judge but also as the expositor of village opinion and public knowledge. Such disputes are increasing in number, giving him more work and responsibility and also more opportunity for the expression of his status. Meanwhile his traditionally crucial ritual and magical (anti-witchcraft) powers continue, though now in somewhat attenuated form.

Fragmentation and Dispersion of Holdings

It has been shown how the inheritance of land, now of increasing importance, results normally in the splitting up of a man's holding.[1] Whether a young man obtains an inherited share of his father's land or he obtains an allocation in another village, its size is likely to be small – smaller than the holdings of his father's generation. Tiny, uneconomic plots are to be seen everywhere in the flood plains.

At the same time a man's holding is tending to comprise a scattered, heterogeneous collection of small plots, as he has obtained land when and where he could. An actual example will illustrate this: a young man had about a tenth of an acre behind his house on which he was growing maize and beans; he had about a quarter of an acre which was his share of his deceased father's land, and another quarter of an acre which had been allocated to him by the headman when a vacated holding was split up, and on both of these he cultivated paddy. This man had only small hope of obtaining more land, unless one of his brothers died without sons, for he had already been refused by the headman a share in a recently vacated holding on the grounds that, unlike many of his contemporaries, he already had at least some arable land.

Even amongst older men the holding of scattered plots is common. This is partly the result of the earlier expansion of cultivation when the formerly unused heads were put under paddy, and partly because older men too, lose no opportunity, in the face of scarcity, to take up any land they can. The Nyakyusa ideal is to have a single large holding, preferably stretching away behind the homestead – or alternatively two fields, one for paddy out in the open plains and one for food crops nearer home. This ideal becomes less and less practicable. There seems to be little or no need for this scatter of plots on account of soil and fertility differences, for these are generally few and unimportant within the area of a single village.

In my sample villages the average number of separate plots was about three per holding. There was a notable difference between villages in relation to the average size of villagers' holdings. Where land was more plentiful the

[1] If there is only one son to inherit the holding it is more likely that he will have to give way to the growing demands of his father's homestead when he is not in any position to resist them.

311
233 Whereas in the Highland and Central regions the large numbers of cattle – in relation, that is, to the available pasture resources – are causing over-grazing and soil erosion, particularly in the hilly areas so often nowadays relegated to pasturage, on the other hand in the flood plains there does not appear, at least to the layman, to have been any serious effects on the land. [24] The natural manuring of the paddy fields in the dry season is advantageous. In the Lake Plains it is the cattle rather than the land which suffer, but so far the Nyakyusa have done virtually nothing to meet the new conditions, other than to complain bitterly and fruitlessly.

The Young Men: Land Shortage and Labour Migration

423 The younger Nyakyusa men find increasing difficulty in obtaining arable land now that there are no longer vacant areas to be taken up, and the older men are no longer prepared to cede their land rights in favour of the younger generation, as they traditionally did. When occasional fields are left vacant, the young men must take their turn with their elders, who themselves are so chronically short of land – and the headmen commonly favour the older villagers with families as against the younger men. This means that in the high-density regions the majority of men under the age of about 30 years have little or no arable land, nor can they hope for it until the deaths of their fathers. In the congested village sites even their banana plots may be smaller than is desirable for the provision of the staple food.

[593] [178] The young man, then, is compelled to remain dependent on his father's and elder brother's holding; indeed, headmen often justify their refusals to allocate plots to young men on the express grounds that the latter must share their elders' fields. Thus the valued independence of the young Nyakyusa is severely restricted and it seems that tensions and difficulties are beginning [578] to arise between fathers and sons, and between brothers, because of this. Sons are blamed for not doing their fair share in the family cultivation; fathers are blamed for giving their sons inadequate shares in crops and crop incomes. It will be remembered that one of the fundamental principles underlying Nyakyusa society and its age-village organisation is the spatial segregation of parents and children (*cf.* page 22). Now they are inevitably being put into competition with one another over inadequate fields in a single holding.

The young men are severely restricted, if not altogether cut off, from the [434] opportunity to cultivate paddy in their own fields and thus to earn their incomes at home, for paddy-growing is the only way of earning a living in the [305] Lake Plains. Yet it is these younger men whose money demand is greatest, *for buy clothing, bicycles and other store goods, and to they earn the marriage payments.* They are therefore strongly attracted by the ready opportunities for taking up wage-labour abroad, in the mines of the Rhodesias and South Africa where wages are high (see Gulliver, 1957).

With the best will in the world, where, as in the very high-density region, the average holding is little more than an acre and a half – when, that is, the elder men themselves desire larger acreages for their own cultivation needs – it is not possible for a father to allow his son to take large shares in his fields. In some cases a father does give outright to his adult sons strips of his holding, but plots so provided are necessarily small. Quite as frequently a father does not consider it possible to break up his holding in his own life-[571] time, and sons are expected to assist in the common cultivation and to continue merely to be given a share in the family proceeds at harvest. It is not [107] surprising, therefore, that very large numbers of young men from the Lake Plains migrate abroad to work. Only about one man in 20 has not been away at all before the age of about 25 years. Much higher proportions of men and larger numbers absolutely are temporarily absent from the Lake

11:Thwaites C-5 (ca. 1942) 1964
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[P.239A]

137 in thickness. This part is devoid of timber except along some river banks—*Albizzia* and *Acacia* spp.—and fuel has to be carried some distance. The dominant herbs are *Crotalaria striata* and *Hyparrhenia* sp., with *Phragmites* and *Pennisetum purpureum* along the rivers.

Methods of Cultivation

241 462 The work of cultivation is equally divided between the sexes. After the plots have been cleared and hand-hoed by the men, it is women's work to plant, clear, harvest, winnow and sell at the market. Men's work consists of clearing, hoeing and looking after the cattle.

242 241 Rotation of crops is practised, as it must be in an area where all land is far from productive. In the highlands, 9,500 feet to 5,000 feet, the rotation in valleys is sweet potatoes, finger millet, groundnuts, finger millet, groundnuts, finger millet and rest for five years, or sweet potatoes, maize for five years and rest for five years. On the hillsides, finger millet and pigeon pea or finger millet alone are sown every fourth year.

In the medium altitudes, between 5,000 feet and 2-3,000 feet, the rotation is finger millet, maize and yams, beans, rested and grazed. Continual planting of rice cannot take place as fertility is so quickly impaired.

In the lower altitudes, below 2,000 feet, rice is planted continuously for some 15 years and the land is then rested and grazed for about 8 years.

Diet and Food Crops

262 No one food is the staple throughout the district, but plantains, maize and sweet potatoes for the higher altitudes and rice on the lake shore are generally eaten, with additions that vary from area to area.

243 Maize is planted both on contoured ridges and on flat land. Holes are drilled generally 3 feet apart and each hole has 3 seeds planted in it. Maize is usually interplanted with beans or Bambarra groundnuts, groundnuts, cowpeas or pigeon peas. Planting takes place in the highlands in July to September and harvesting in February to April. In the medium altitudes, two crops are planted annually, in November to February and again in May to June. In the lower altitudes, however, little maize is grown and this is sown in November to December and harvested in March and April. Maize is stored in mud-covered basket granaries or is sold as soon as it is dried. It is eaten roasted or boiled with beans. The varieties of maize grown vary but they are mostly of the hard flint type.

[241] [261] [262]

241 Other foodstuffs grown are coco-yams, cow peas, pigeon peas, Bambarra groundnuts, ginger, cardamon, groundnuts, wheat, pumpkins, peppers, citrus, sugar cane and European vegetables, including a quantity of European potatoes. [177]

Economic Crops

245 One of the main cash crops is coffee, which was introduced about 1900 by the Berlin Lutheran Mission, but it was not grown by natives until 1930 when an attempt was made to organize an industry. It had already been tried from 1924 onwards by Europeans but had gradually died out, giving place to tea. 177

245 Native coffee has not been truly successful and many reasons are suspected for this. In effect, the coffee suffers from many pests and diseases and yields are so low as to be almost uneconomical even to a tribe of very low individual annual income. It has become obvious that coffee can only be grown by natives if shaded by bananas and mulched heavily with banana trash." Multiple-stem pruning is gaining favour.

Seedlings are planted out in December and the first crop is obtained four years after. The area planted rose in 1939 to 5,804 acres and the number of native planters to 7,966. Yields, however, are low, varying from 131.4 kg. to 20.4 kg. parchment to the acre. Hemeleia leaf disease and yellow and white borer are prevalent all over the coffee-growing area. Over the period since 1932 the price paid to natives has averaged 44 cents a kg. for parchment. [134]

[438] All coffee is collected and sold by Native Authority after rough grading and, in order to [432] encourage better preparation, much lower payments are made for the inferior grades. A native staff is employed to visit coffee plots and to give instructions, and it is noticeable that the quality of preparation varies with the price.

175 The cultivation of rice on the lake shore was started by Chief Kerosa in 1896 with seed 243 obtained from Arab traders in Nyasaland and the Moravian Mission issued further seed in 1898. Being an innovation, rice was not popular and little was grown except for small local sales. In 1917 the Government issued seed [251] and tax was paid in rice instead of money. Interest was hereby aroused and the cultivation of rice was started. In 1932 several other kinds of seed were issued and now sixteen varieties 243 are found. "Faya", which was issued in 1929, gives the best yields and is the variety chiefly grown, other varieties being Bungala, Marula

243 and Mapiko, although very little of these is sold. Ploughs have been introduced into the area as it is flat and the total number in use in 1942 is about 400. The first ploughing is carried out in June or July when the ground is still wet, and the second ploughing in October to February. Planting, which is all broadcast, is carried out in November to the middle of March and the harvesting is done in May to September.

256 A first mill was erected at Ipyana on the lake shore in 1942 with a capacity of 9 tons of rice in 15 hours. Another is now on its way from India with a capacity of 14 tons of rice in 15 hours and should be erected some time in 1944.

248 A small acreage of cotton is also sown along the Songwe River boundary, which borders on Nyasaland, with seed obtained from that Colony. Conditions, however, are not suitable on the remainder of the lake shore and expansion is not encouraged.

● 241 439 A list of exports from the district with approximate weights for 1942 is appended:—

Article	Weight in tons
	Tons
Mixed beans	500
Coffee	50
Groundnuts	60
Maize	1,850
Onions	50
European potatoes	200
Rice	1,800
Vegetables	60
Fruit	100
Banana flour	300
Cassava flour	60
Finger millet	150
Tea (European produce)	210
Total ..	4,770

Land Tenure and Economics of the People

423 In theory all land belongs to the chiefs or sub-chiefs, but in practice once a man has cultivated a plot, that plot belongs to him until he leaves the area in which he lives. If he leaves, the land reverts to the chief or sub-chief and may be given by him through his headman or elder to anyone in his area who is short of land or to a newcomer who wants a plot. Should a man go away and return after a long period and ask for a plot, he is bound to be given one but not necessarily the plot he had before he left. Newcomers are welcomed and are given land, as the amount of tax collected in an area is an indication of the importance of a chief. [554 609 651]

233 Stock grazing is a problem which is coming more and more to the fore. The number of

438 north. Before the war, the goldfields gave work
316 to about 15,000 natives, chiefly Wanyakyusa,
[464] and most of the foodstuffs from this district went there. The goldfields are gradually closing due to difficulties in obtaining spares, and it has been necessary to look for outlets for Tukuyu produce elsewhere. Should the goldfields open again after the war, and large-scale mining start, there is a great future for produce grown in Tukuyu.

434 The main income of the tribe is derived from agricultural, military, mining and public works sources, and it is estimated that in 1941 the average annual income per man, woman and child was about Sh. 10 per year. It has risen considerably since, as over 4,000 men have joined the military and a large part of their salaries comes back to the district in the form of remittances. The agricultural source, from which a larger part of the tribal income
[464] accrues, is from sales of rice, maize and other foodstuffs. A fair number of Wanyakyusa also work on the tea plantations.

● 241 The picture sketched above will show that the district is inhabited by a tribe whose agriculture is of great interest, since the variety of crops, from wheat in the highlands to paddy and cotton on the lake shore, is perhaps unrivalled in so small an area elsewhere in
181 East Africa. It has not been possible to fill in the picture with details of the people's character, but it is worth mentioning that the Wanyakyusa are a people difficult to administer, argumentative, litigious, self-willed and at times inclined to truculence. Nevertheless their intelligence is such that they are
153 willing to be persuaded, and, once convinced of the benefit of any change, adopt it with energy. This is instanced by the way they have in a few years accepted the principles of anti-erosion to such an extent that now there is perhaps 90 per cent control in the well-populated areas. It should, however, be stressed
134 that, though the soil is not being eroded to
241 any great extent, it is still being impoverished, since increased cultivation for the war effort has involved breaking a great deal of new land with a consequent lessening of fallow. Over-cropping in the hilly country is very great and, in order to prevent further emigration, it be-
[195] hoves the native planners to learn to put something back into the soil in the form of mulch or compost. If care is not taken, a comparatively prosperous country will one day become like so many parts of Africa, where a losing struggle is fought with Nature to obtain a sufficiency for the people's needs.

ex Tim September, 1941)

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

342 353 622 778 [775] [824] he had received this object from his ancestors and it must always hang on this spot, as the ancestral spirits (*ubuzyuka*)[29] themselves controlled its presence. It consisted of an *uwesipera*, i. e. the tail of an ox, but the upper part of it was hollow. In this hollow part medicines (*ifingila*)[30] were kept. Yet another magical medicine, in the shape of a piece of bark of the tree called *Erythrophleum Guineense*[31] was fastened at the upper end of this sign. When my European attendant immediately said to the chief: "And from this piece you make your *mwafi*"[32], the chief exclaimed in astonishment: "*Umwe wena Kyara!*" (You are sons of Kyara! i. e. You Europeans know everything.)

After this there was no more delay in revealing to us some more features of this sign of dignity. According to the belief of his fathers this object possessed a special *emaka* (power)[33], e. g. to defeat enemies, if the chief were to hold it directly against them. Also if a thief were [789] to try to enter the room by force, by making a hole beneath the wall of this part of the hut, he would be stricken by power coming from the *ubuzinya* and he would have the impression that eyes are directed against him, and so be driven away.

[595] After these interesting communications I went to visit the hut of one of his wives, which still revealed the *inyenga*, the old-fashioned round structure of bamboo poles diverging from their upper end and thatched with grass[34].

● 241 784 9. The frequent walks in company with the chief or some of his *amafumu* gave me several opportunities for enquiries. On one occasion,

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[29] Cf. Wilson, Burial, p. 9: *ezipuka* (Sing.); Mackenzie, p. 191: *banyoka* (Karonga).

[30] Cf. Mackenzie, p. 275: *ifingira* (Karonga).

[278] [31] The pharmacological substance of the bark (Cortex Erythrophlei, „Sassa-bark") is the alkaloid Erythrophleïn which produces the same typical effects on the heart as the Digitalis-group (cf. C. G. Santesson: Pflanzlichstudien XII. Arkiv för Botanik 27 A, No. 4. Stockholm 1938, p. 6).

[32] Cf. Wilson, Land Rights, p. 32; Merensky, p. 134; Fülleborn, p. 368.

[33] *emaka* is not a specific expression for „magical" or (religious) „supernatural" power, although, from the European standpoint this meaning may be connected with the word in specific cases, but generally it means any striking expression or effect of a quality of a person or object, e. g. *ugubi abi ngalimo emaka*, in this wood is power. This word is, therefore, a parallel to the Austronesian, especially Polynesian word *mana*, examined in my treatise „Mana. The term of that what is exceedingly striking". Baessler-Archiv Forschungsmittel für Völkerkunde. I. Reihe, Ethnographie. Vol. I. Leipzig 1933. If the Nyakyusa wishes to say that a phenomenon is "supernatural", then he connects it with Kyara, or he names it directly "Kiara" (cf. Merensky, p. 118 [197, 218]).

[34] Cf. Fülleborn, p. 377, fig. 149. Schematical average of a round-hut (to also to be found with the Nyakyusa still today).

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

when we went to a field I saw a stick of a special type upright in the soil. It was made of a reed split at the top, with a small bundle of leaves squeezed in the split. A piece of bark stood out from this bundle. I asked the chief for the significance of this and he explained that it was an ulusinga, i. e. a tabu sign to prevent anyone from stepping on the field which was an imasiti (yam-field). This sign was believed to possess "magical power", to strike an invader with illness. Each owner of a field has the right to protect his field in such a manner, and a chief especially has the right to command tabus regarding plants which are staple food for the whole chiefdainship, as, for instance, maize that is not allowed to be reaped before the chief has given his permission. All such tabus are also named mwiko*. During the time of such a general tabu, visitors, who by chance come through a village under tabu, are not allowed to greet the inhabitants of the village or to speak to them.

The chief added that special watchmen are installed during these periods; these men are dressed in a terrifying manner, and have the right to arrest any person transgressing the tabu. The chief may punish the offenders immediately, imposing on them, for instance, a cow as a fine. This was also the case with an ordinary theft in a field, but nowadays such affairs are regulated by the law of the Mandated Government. After the repeal of such a general tabu by the chief, beer will be drunk (e. g. ubwaluwo bwa kutapila bwa kutondeka, the beer that is poured out at the harvest), and the usual eating community of men will be re-established, for Nyakyusa men like to eat together as comrades, not in families.

18. When I was in Katumba, dances were held on several days from the afternoon till midnight, very similar in form to that which Mackenzie describes (p. 189) by the name ikimbombi.

The men stood on one side of the open place in several lines, with sticks in their hands; on the opposite side were the women and girls. Between them, more in the background, were the drummers, at the beginning of the dance; then they moved round the place. The principal drummer was a man of great excitability. He performed most extravagant movements with his body and his drumstick, making somersaults, jumping over the drum, treating it as a "living being", running to it and turning just in front of it.

* This word mwiko (forbidden) has the same wide (profane and ritual) meanings as tapu or tabu in the Polynesian Languages (cf. Rud. Lehmann: Die polynesischen Tabu-Sitten. Diss. Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde i. L. Leipzig 1939).

14:Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 F317 Ngonde F317
Nyakyusa

[P.138]

Notes on the daily life of the Nyakyusa (Tanganyika Territory)

Cf. Sociologus 1951, I, 1 S. 51 ff.

By F. Rudolf Lehmann

192 576 *1. Greetings.* The first thing to strike a visitor to the Nyakyusa country north of Lake Nyasa on passing through one of the numerous picturesque villages surrounded by banana groves is the way of greeting customary among these people. "Ukupoopa" is the Nyakyusa word for "to greet". In the morning you are greeted with the exclamation: "*upoile (pl. mupoile)*", which literally means: "Did you sleep well?" And you may answer in the same way, or, in fuller form as you can hear it from the mouth of the natives: "*se'e ndapa, upoile*", or "*upoila pyopyo*". "*se'e ndapa*" may be used with all answers, meaning: thanks! At noon or in the afternoon you will hear: "*woombide*", you have worked, or, have you worked? Then, according to the case, you may answer: "*mwoombide oyonda*", you, men, have worked, or, generally: "*mwongere*", which is equivalent to the Swahili: "*kheri gani?*". If you greet a person in the evening with the words: "*upoopa*", may you sleep well, the person thus addressed will answer: "*kapona!*".

234 [312] *2. Milking.* The first task in the daily life of the Nyakyusa people is for the men to milk the cows. This is done in the morning before the cattle are driven out to graze and again in the evening when they return. But the cattle are also driven back to the village at noon when they are usually fumigated standing in the smoke of a fire for which cow dung and banana leaves are used, a process designed to remove [237 232] vermin from the skin of the cattle. The animals seem to be very fond of this procedure. They stand quietly in the smoke gazing at the passers-by.

241 [462] *3. Hoeing.* "Hoeing is the work of men, planting weeding, reaping is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a. m., on the upland plateau they

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 F767 Ngonde F767
Nyakyusa

begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done." (G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 260).

The putting of maize-grains as seed into the earth is the women's work, the sowing of millet (*malesi*) of both sexes. If you ask the men after they had come home from their work: "*Mukumbide tjisonga fye nongi?*", "Whose fields did you hoe?", the answer often may be: "*Tukumbide tjisonga fye tata!*" We have hoed the fields of our father.

In former times, the Nyakyusa had a lot of ceremonies relating to the beginning of the hoeing season and of the beginning of the harvest-work. They are, however, nowadays nearly extinguished under the influence of European culture.

With respect to the beginning of the hoeing season, a very comprehensive ceremony had to be carried out by the chief in community with the *unganga* (medicine man) for providing the fields with extraordinary (*-sinya*) power (*amaka*): *amaka amasinya*, in this case: fertility.

When the crop was ripe, it was (at first) forbidden (*mwiko*) to take anything from the crop before the chief had given the permission. First the oldest male villagers informed the chief that it may be now the just time to give the crop free for the people, saying: "The people is hungry, we will now give them to eat!" Then the chief ordered that 6 or 8 (*malesi*) corn-cobs were brought to him, and he sent these corn-cobs by a messenger to the (holy) offering-grove where they must be put down. After that has been correctly executed, he gave the permission for reaping the new crop.

(NB. It was believed that these corn-cobs put into the offering-grove were eaten especially from the leopards. The powderee bones of the leopards were considered important ingredients of the consecration drink which the chief had to take at his initiation ceremonies and which should give him the strength (*amaka*) of a leopard, so that he also was called "the leopard" or "the leopard chief".)

4. *Herding the Cattle and Cleansing the Stables.* The sociological importance of cattle among the Nyakyusa and the specific practice among them of herding the cattle by herdboys, that is also of highly sociological importance for the structure of the Nyakyusa society, is already described by G. Wilson (Introduction, p. 269 f).

The cleansing of the stables of which the Nyakyusa possess a great number of very well built ones, which have also sometimes a considerable length — apart from the cattle kraals —, is the task of